THE ACCULTURATION OF AN IMMIGRANT LUTHERAN CHURCH:
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD, 1917-1929

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ABSTRACT

The Acculturation of an Immigrant Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1917-1929

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The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is a conservative Lutheran denomination organized by German immigrants in 1847. It grew to be the largest of the original immigrant Lutheran groups, expanding from the Midwest to both coasts. The Synod retained, however, both a remarkably monolithic structure and a distinctly German character well into the twentieth century. By the First World War, German was still the language of most worship services and religious instruction. Such usage indicated the general lack of Americanization within the Synod.

In the early years of the First World War, Missouri Synod Lutherans favored the Central Powers. This attitude and the use of German made the Synod a popular target for the hysterical patriotism which accompanied American entry into the war. Missouri Synod pastors and congregations were victims of outrageous violations of civil liberties. The war experience was beneficial, however, for it forced a radical quickening in the pace of acculturation. Between World War I and the Depression, impressive changes were made

in language, missionary orientation, lay-clergy relations, fund raising, and in organization.

English had been introduced in the Synod before 1900, but not until the war was it generally adopted. By the end of the Twenties it had achieved dominance over German in almost every aspect of Synodical life. The adoption of more English, however, meant that soundly Lutheran literature had now to be provided in English. German had helped isolate the Synod from many currents in American life; this linguistic insulation had now to be replaced by indoctrination in the English Synodical press. A new cadre of English-speaking leaders had now to be developed. To a large degree, all this was successfully done by the Depression.

In the absence of mass German immigration, the post-war Missouri Synod faced a catastrophic drop in growth until it turned to native Americans as its mission field. Yet, in American missions, the Synod had to train its pastors in new techniques and also had to cope with the population shifts of the Twenties. The rural itinerant missionary system had to be contracted while new churches had to be founded in fast-growing suburbs. To effect such changes, reformers in the Synod called for a rationalization of mission administration. Although much remained to be done by 1929, the Synod was by then committed to an "American" mission policy.

The reorientation of mission effort involved also the phenomenal rise of evangelical advertising. Most prominent was the New York-based American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, representing an Americanized element of the Synod's clergy. The Bureau's program included newspaper advertising, tract distribution, and special publicity projects. Another development was early Synodical efforts in religious radio broadcasting. Publicity, radio, mass rallies, and the construction of impressive churches and educational buildings all helped give the Missouri Synod Lutheran status in the American society into which he was integrating.

The Lutheran immigrant community had traditionally been led by the Lutheran pastor. In the rapidly acculturating Synod, however, there was fruitful conflict and cooperation between laity and clergy as Herr Pastor became Reverend. The focal point for lay activism became fund raising, and the key organization, the Lutheran Laymen's League. Founded in 1917, the League raised financial expectations and awakened the laymen to their potential. After its initial success, though, the League had difficulty finding an adequate base until 1929 when it reorganized and adopted radio evangelism as its goal.

With impetus provided by the laymen and seconded by interested clergy, the Synod during the Twenties made significant improvements in fund raising techniques, such as special drives, envelopes, and complete canvassing. Regular Synodical receipts rose steadily; budgets rose even more quickly. The resulting pressure helped produce a more centralized bureaucracy administering the Synod. By 1929 the Synodical laity had assumed the financial duties imposed by the American religious system.

The Missouri Synod was not completely Americanized by 1929, but it had changed remarkably since 1917, and gave every indication of having established the base for future growth among American, rather than immigrant, denominations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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No one can write on Missouri Synod history without a stay at the Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis. The Institute's director, Pastor August R. Suelflow, and his staff went far out of their way to make my work there enjoyable and fruitful. In extended discussions, Pastor Suelflow and Dr. Carl S. Meyer, Director of Graduate Studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, gave me the benefit of their encyclopedic knowledge of the Synod, setting me straight in many matters. Various people, listed in the bibliography, kindly consented to be interviewed, in some

cases repeatedly.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

Absl	*Die Abendschule*
AL	*American Lutheran*
AM	*Alma Mater*
BdD	Synodical Board of Directors
CHI	Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri
CHIQ	*Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*
CPH	Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
DL	*Der Lutheraner*
Ein.	*Eingaben**
HM	*Magazin fuer Ev.-Luth. Homiletik*
LC	*Lutheran Cyclopedia*
LCA	*Lutheran Church Art*
LLL	Lutheran Laymen's League
LP	*Lutheran Pioneer*
LSJ	*Lutheran School Journal* (*Evangelisch-Lutherisches Schulblatt*)
LSSB	*Lutheran Soldiers' and Sailors' Bulletin*
LuW	*Lehre und Wehre*
LW	*Lutheran Witness*
Min.	Minutes
Pro.	*Proceedings**
SYB	*Statistical Yearbook*

TG	Theodore Graebner Papers
TM	*Theological Monthly*
Trans.	Transcript**
TQ	*Theological Quarterly*
Ver.	*Verhandlungen**
W&M	Ways and Means Committee

*Three documents were issued for the triennial conventions of the Synod: a pre-convention book of reports and memorials (*Eingaben*), the German proceedings (*Verhandlungen*), and an English proceedings. As noted above, these are abbreviated *Ein*., *Ver*., and *Pro*., respectively, followed by the year and the page reference.

**Stenographic transcripts were made of parts of the Lutheran Laymen's League meetings on Nov. 7, 1919 and June 14-15, 1920. These are abbreviated Trans., followed by the appropriate year and the page reference.

FOREWARD

Since its founding in 1847, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has never been in the mainstream of American Protestantism. As an immigrant church, it was long insulated by its use of German, but even the English-speaking Missouri Synod of the twentieth century has continued to chart its own way, largely independent of the rest of American Protestantism.

At present the ninth largest Protestant denomination, with a baptized membership of more than two and a half million, it has remained aloof from the multiple mergers of American Lutheranism in the early 1960's and is the only Protestant denomination of any size other than the Southern Baptist Convention to remain unaffiliated with the National Council of Churches. Socially, though, it is solidly middle-class, with appeal neither for oil millionaires nor for the disinherited to differentiate it from the suburban masses.

To the extent that it has participated at all in the theological discussions of the twentieth century, the Synod has traditionally upheld a position based on divinely-inspired, inerrant Scripture. It boasts the highest growth rate of any major American Protestant denomination since the Second World War. Preserving a system of ministerial education which begins in residential preparatory schools at the ninth grade level, the Missouri Synod also maintains the largest Protestant system of parochial schools--both elementary and secondary. At the same time, it is a leader in contemporary church architecture and outranks all other denominations in its use of radio and television.

In an age when ecumenicity receives high priority, the Missouri Synod is to some an anachronism; to other observers, its confessional tradition, liturgical heritage, and sense of community are potential assets for promoting a vigorous renewal of Protestant life generally.[1] To all, however, the apparent contradictions within the Missouri Synod make explaining it difficult. One cannot, in fact, explain it without attention to the Missouri Synod's past.

Two periods in the Synod's history are especially important: the era of its founding and early growth, and, since it is an immigrant church, the years of transition from German to English, from immigrant to American. The first era, between 1838 and about 1850, has been explored in some depth.[2] The second, concentrated between the First World War and the Depression, is less well known.

The Missouri Synod maintained its immigrant character until well into the twentieth century. In the body generally there was surprisingly little assimilation, that process of change and adaptation induced by physical and intellectual confrontation with America.[1] By the time of World War I, however, the Synod could not avoid wrestling with problems facing it as an immigrant church, problems such as the change in language or the leakage among the younger generation. By that time, too, the Synod had grown to the point that it had to reckon with administrative and financial difficulties. Within itself, the Synod thus had crucial problems to solve. It was not allowed to solve them in a vacuum, though, for the war, with its vociferous anti-Germanism on the home front, was followed by the Twenties, with its social disruptions.

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[1] Winthrop Hudson, American Protestantism (Chicago, 1961), p. 176.

[2] See particularly Walter Forster, Zion on the Mississippi (CPH, 1953), Carl S. Mundinger, Government in the Missouri Synod (CPH, 1947), and Carl S. Meyer, "Secondary and Higher Education in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1839-1874" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954).

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[1] More specifically, assimilation is used in this study to identify the process of change in various facets of life and thought of a group or individual, a process induced and guided by transfer to a foreign environment. The rate of this change often reaches a peak, typically during the lives of the immigrant and his children, but usually continues at a slower pace for generations thereafter. Most often the change is toward the culture of the host society, or the core group within the host society; in the United States, this core group has usually been defined as white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant.

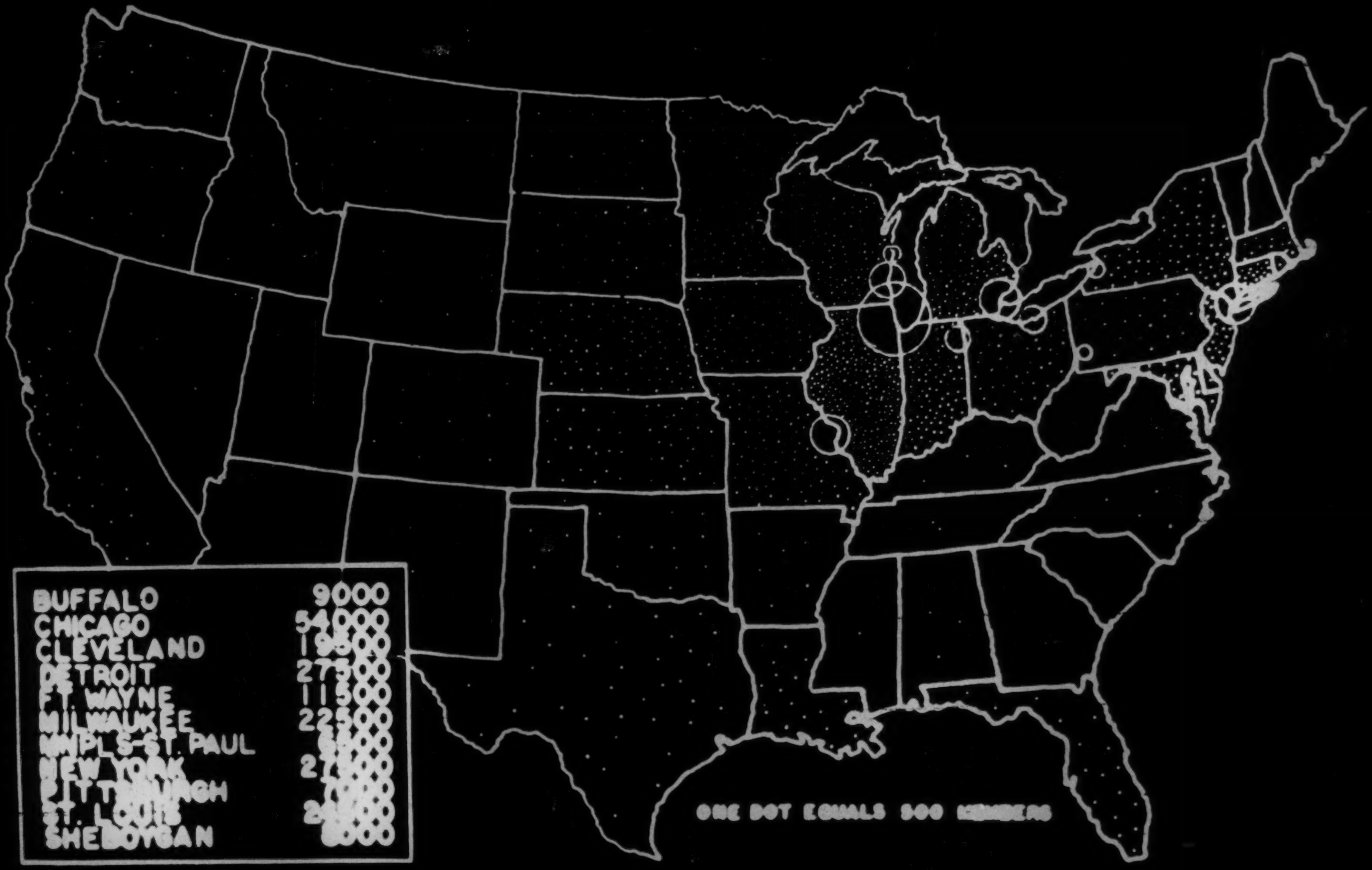
Since the Missouri Synod constituency was white, northern European, and Protestant, one possibility influencing the rate of assimilation--rejection by the core group, as in the case of Negroes or Jews--was virtually eliminated. A possible exception to this generalization might be the wartime persecution. Even this, however, was not a case of an immigrant ready to assimilate (i.e., English-speaking), but refused admission to the core group. In other words, without, of course, ignoring the American environment, one may safely focus on the Synod itself in a discussion of assimilation.

According to Milton H. Gordon, within such a general definition of assimilation as that above, there are seven major variables. The first is the obvious change of cultural patterns (language or political behavior, for instance) to those of the host culture. (Gordon terms this variable acculturation. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that I have not made such a distinction between assimilation and acculturation in the following study, but have in most cases used the two words interchangeably.)

The second variable is large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society, an entrance that brings with it close, personal relationships of a fairly intimate nature. This leads into the third variable, that of large-scale intermarriage. Another variable is what Gordon calls the development of a sense of peoplehood based exclusively on the host culture. A fifth is the absence of value and power conflict with the host culture. The final two variables are the absence of prejudice and of discrimination. (See Gordon's helpful discussion in Assimilation in American Life [New York, 1964], pp. 60-84.)

The following consideration of Missouri Synod acculturation is concerned primarily with aspects of the first three factors, and, since an early stage of assimilation is under scrutiny, especially with the first variable.

The Twenties were painful and crowded years of Americanization. But by 1929 it was reasonably certain that the Synod had successfully hurdled the major barriers of acculturation; the Depression brought new and different problems. The Missouri Synod was by no means a typically American denomination by the end of the decade, nor was it soon to become such. But of six primary facets of an immigrant church body--theology, social attitudes, language, missionary orientation, educational system, and organization--only official positions on theology and on social attitudes continued largely unchanged in the period between the War and the Depression. Language, missions, provisions for education, and organization, including lay-clergy relations and fund raising, all were significantly influenced by the American environment particularly between 1917 and 1929.


BUFFALO 9000
CHICAGO 54000
CLEVELAND 19500
DETROIT 27300
FT. WAYNE 11500
MILWAUKEE 22500
MNPLS-ST. PAUL [illegible]
NEW YORK 2[illegible]
PITTSBURGH [illegible]
ST. LOUIS 2[illegible]
SHEBOYGAN [illegible]
ONE DOT EQUALS 500 MEMBERS

DISTRIBUTION OF MISSOURI SYNOD LUTHERANS, 1920

FROM 1920 SYB

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Deutsche Evangelische-Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und anderen Staaten entered 1917 with a history of nearly three-quarters of a century on American soil. The original nucleus for the Synod was a small group of Saxon immigrants which arrived in America early in 1839 under the leadership of Pastor Martin Stephan.[1] Stephan, a charismatic leader from Dresden, reaffirmed conservative Lutheran theology against the rationalism and syncretism of nineteenth century Lutheranism. As he gathered a sizeable following, however, Stephan's movement became increasingly personal and sect-like. When his position became politically untenable in Germany, Stephan led his followers to an American zion in Perry County, Missouri, south of St. Louis.

The little colony was soon disillusioned by revelations of Stephan's fiscal and alleged sexual adventuring, however, and Stephan was unceremoniously banished to the opposite bank of the Mississippi. After a period of uncertainty in the group, C. F. W. Walther, one of the clergymen following Stephan, assumed leadership. Walther became a dominant figure in conservative Lutheranism in the nineteenth century.

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, the following outline of the Synod's early history is based on the two standard works dealing with the Saxon immigration and the founding of the Synod, Walter Forster, Zion on the Mississippi, and Carl S. Mundinger, Government in the Missouri Synod.

This Stephanite immigration was only a fraction of the German immigrants who came to the Midwest singly and in groups beginning in the 1830's. A few German clergymen also came independently to minister to their countrymen; largely through the influence of one of these pastors, F. C. D. Wyneken, missionary interest in Germany was aroused. Wilhelm Loehe, a conservative German church leader, began sending specially trained men as missionaries. Unhappy with the liberal American Lutheranism which had developed from the seventeenth and eighteenth century German and Scandinavian immigration, these missionaries made contact with Walther in St. Louis. Walther's periodical Der Lutheraner served to rally unaffiliated conservative Lutherans to a common cause.

Formal organization of the Synod took place in Chicago in 1847. A remarkably monolithic structure was gradually erected, supported by the Synodical form of government, a broad educational system, a complicated history of theological controversies with other synods, a large number of publications giving the Missourian viewpoint, nearly exclusive use of the German language, and a never ending stream of German immigrants wanting the services of a deutscher Pastor.

The Synodical government was itself important. Mostly because of reaction to Stephan's hierarchical ventures, a constitution was adopted which recognized the individual congregation as the source of power. Congregations joined the Synod to better conserve and propagate orthodox Lutheranism, and they empowered it to train and supervise pastors and teachers. Resolutions of the Synod were not binding upon the individual congregations until approved by them.[1] The laity was given a prominent voice in Synodical conventions, but the sacred calling of the ministry was maintained. The real cement which held the whole structure together was the strong bond of a foreign language and of conservative doctrine.

Besides government, the Synod was unusual in its educational system. From the very first the Synod had its own institutions to train its pastors: a "practical" seminary, finally moved to Springfield, Illinois, and a classical seminary at St. Louis, offering a more thorough theological training. A system of elementary schools, preparatory schools, and junior colleges gradually grew up all over the country out of the three-fold desire to preserve the language, inculcate the faith, and feed the seminaries.[2] The result of this educational system was a relatively well-educated clergy with a remarkably homogeneous background and common loyalties.

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[1] The most thorough survey of the evolution of Synodical polity is August R. Suelflow, "Congregation-Synod Relations in Historical Perspective, 1847-1961" (mimeographed, 1960-1961).

[2] Popular outlines (the only available) of the later Synodical history are provided by Walter A. Baepler, A Century of Grace (CPH, 1947), and W. G. Polack, The Building of a Great Church (CPH, 1941). The most comprehensive treatment of Synodical elementary schools is August C. Stellhorn, Schools of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (CPH, 1963); Stellhorn's bibliography includes most of the monographs on the subject.

Another influence toward cohesiveness was a long series of theological debates with other Lutheran groups.[1] From its Stephanite days, the Synod had a tradition of an uncompromising stand for what it believed to be the truth, and a willingness to set itself apart from the society and the sects around it. Immigration to the United States meant only that the adversary became liberal American Lutheranism instead of the state church. First the Missourian emphasis on the Lutheran Confessions distinguished it from the native American Lutheranism centered in the East; then a prolonged discussion on predestination cut the Missouri Synod off from other orthodox immigrant Lutheran synods.

It is not necessary to go into the theological niceties of these disagreements in order to understand that such differences were unifying forces for Missouri Synod pastors and laymen. As its leaders described the Synod's position, boundaries became ever more defined, and the Missouri Synod ever more set apart. As relations with one group after another were broken, the Synod could see itself as standing for the truth in an increasingly isolated and beleaguered position. By the turn of the century, the Synod had no enemies on its right within American Lutheranism. "Missourian" became a synonym for ultra-conservatism.

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[1] See Ernest Theodore Bachmann, "The Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1946); Vergilius Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology (New York, 1927); and Carl Mauelshagen, American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism (Athens, Ga., 1936). For Missourian viewpoint, see Baepler, Polack, and Ebenezer, ed. W. H. T. Dau (CPH, 1922).

Beginning with Walther's Der Lutheraner, the Missourians placed much stress on printed matter. By 1869 the Synod had its own publishing firm; the result was a steady flow of all types of propaganda expressing the Synod's viewpoint. The St. Louis seminary faculty acted as censor for the Synod's official publications. Faculty members filled all of the editorial chairs, and most of the faculty contributed to one or more of the periodicals. Between 1917 and 1929 the two major organs of the Synod were Der Lutheraner, edited by Ludwig Fuerbringer, and its English counterpart, the Lutheran Witness, edited by Theodore Graebner and Martin Sommer. Both papers were published fortnightly. In addition, primarily for pastors, were Lehre und Wehre, the Magazin fuer Ev.-Luth. Homiletik, and the Theological Quarterly, changed in 1920 to the Theological Monthly.[1] Parochial school teachers read the monthly Schulblatt (changed in 1921 to the Lutheran School Journal), edited by the faculty of Concordia Teachers College at River Forest, Illinois. Within the Synod, though not official, were the Walther League Messenger, the organ of the young people's society, and the American Lutheran, the mouthpiece of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau.[1]

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[1] Lehre und Wehre was edited by Friedrich Bente until 1926, thereafter by Franz Pieper; the Magazin by George Mezger; and the Quarterly and Monthly by W. H. T. Dau until 1926 and between 1926 and 1929 by William Arndt. See Ludwig Fuerbringer, Eighty Eventful Years (CPH, 1944), pp. 184-185.

During the Twenties, the chorus of the Synod's publications was an integral part of Synodical life. The press played probably a less important role than in nineteenth century Lutheranism, but a considerably more significant role than today. It is the most complete reflection of the Missouri Synod between the War and the Depression.

Finally, the Missouri Synod would not have been what it was without the mass German immigration between about 1845 and 1895. In that fifty year span more than four and a half million Germans settled in the United States.[2] The Missouri Synod depended upon the Lutheran portion of this influx for its growth.[3] To gather in this diaspora the Synod resorted to Reiseprediger, the itinerant ministers or circuit riders. They ranged farther and farther west, seeking out settlements of German Lutherans. Their success was reflected in the phenomenal growth of the Synod in the nineteenth century. When the Synod was organized in 1847, it had just above four thousand members; by 1917, it boasted just above one million.[1]

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[1] Edited by Walter A. Maier and Paul Lindemann, respectively.

[2] Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D.C., 1960), p. 56.

[3] Asked the Commission for Emigrant Missions in 1874, "Was waere insonderheit unser theure lutherische Kirche in diesem Lande ohne die Einwanderung?" Ver., 1874, 63. Quoted in a discussion of this point by Carl S. Meyer, "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement,'" CTM, XXXII, (July 1961), 407.

German immigrants who came especially in the 1880's and 1890's brought with them a militant patriotism and thus reinforced the natural immigrant tendency to retain the language of the fatherland. Even legal deeds to institutions specified that German must be used in perpetuity;[2] all instruction and nearly all preaching was long restricted to German. The prejudice against English was such that in 1887 the Synod refused to accept into membership a group of English-speaking churches professing doctrinal agreement; it recommended instead that these churches organize a separate English Missouri Synod. This done, the parallel Synods continued in their work until 1911 when the English Synod became the English District of the Missouri Synod, the only exception in the Synod to geographically organized districts.[1]

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[1] *SYB*, 1937, 150-153.

[2] The transfer of the Fort Wayne preparatory school from its initial sponser, Wilhelm Loehe, to Missouri Synod control specified "*das als alleiniges Lehremittel in die Seminar die deutsche Sprache angenommen sie und unverbruechlich bleibe.*" *Zweiter Synodalbericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten* (St. Louis, 1848), p. 16.

Though Wilhelm Loehe did not make the German language a *sine qua non* for confessional Lutheranism, in an introduction to a translation of Nicolaus Hunnius' *Epitome Credenorum* (being sent to America to propagandize for conservative Lutheranism), Loehe stated, "it is always with great pain that we read, that in any part of North America the hope of retaining German language and nationality is past." Paul Edward Gottheil, trans. (Nuremberg, 1847), p. v. See also p. vii. I am indebted to Dr. Carl S. Meyer for calling this reference to my attention.

See also Carl S. Meyer, "Lutheran Immigrant Churches Face the Problems of the Frontier," *Church History*, XXIX (Dec. 1960), 452-455.

By the First World War, the Missouri Synod had not changed greatly from the mid-nineteenth century.[2] Immigration from Germany had been dwindling since before the turn of the century, but Midwest centers such as St. Louis, Chicago, and Milwaukee had a sufficient reservoir of German culture to continue Old World ways into the second or even third generation. What immigration there existed was directed to the sparsely settled northern plains of the United States and Canada. There the Reiseprediger still went from settlement to settlement inquiring after Germans. In the cities the size and age of the German Lutheran congregations seemed to assure stability and permanence. The perceptive observer might have noticed that the birth rate in the Synod was falling rapidly, that leakage of membership was alarmingly high, and that the prospects for a smooth eventual transition from German to English were not promising. On the other hand, Lutheranism was soon to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, and the Missouri Synod was thankful and proud that it had preserved "Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr Rein."

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[1] See H. P. Eckhardt, The English District (n.p., 1946).

[2] The Christian Century, a non-denominational paper, picked an earlier century; in a paragraph that told almost as much about the magazine as it said about the Missouri Synod, the Christian Century gave the following description:

> "The Missouri Lutheran Church has its strength in the Middle West, and its largest theological seminary is in St. Louis, Mo. It represents a distinctively American development in Lutheranism, for which there is practically no parallel in Europe. It has isolated itself from other churches with an effectiveness which may be equalled by the Southern Baptists, but is not surpassed by any other body. Its discipline is iron, and it enforces conformity to a theology which may be best described as an ossified seventeenth-century orthodoxy."

The Christian Century found the Missourian conception of salvation "highly magical," and saw striking similarities with the Roman Catholic Church.

> "Like Catholicism it perpetuates itself through the parochial school. The rigid discipline of the Church seems to be under the control of the theological seminary faculty, which has become a kind of corporate pope. Curiously enough anti-Catholicism runs very high in this denomination, which is, in many of its characteristics, more closely akin to Catholicism than any other Protestant body, not excepting Anglicanism."

Although the periodical granted the Synod's remarkable growth, it attributed this to "the missionary energy which unqualified denominational zeal always supplies." For the liberal Christian Century, the most damning aspect of the Synod was that

> "its social influence upon American life is very slight, and its ministers are prevented by the many restrictions which hedge them about from assuming positive social leadership in the various communities where they labor. The Church is almost as rigid and unbending as Rome, and it consciously isolates itself from the other portions of American Protestantism."

"What is Disturbing the Lutherans?," XLII (1926), 909-910.

CHAPTER II

PERSECUTION AND DIVIDED LOYALTIES

On the eve of the American declaration of war, Woodrow Wilson told a visiting newsman, "Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. To fight you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into every fibre of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policemen on the beat, the man on the street."[1] Wilson's grasp of the situation was correct in every detail; his prophecy was to become a frightening reality. With adolescent energy and monochromatic morality, the American people went to war.

With the American people went the American churches. The war against the Central Powers became a holy crusade. Democracy, Americanism, and Christianity became a new trinity. The editor of the Unitarian Christian Register assured his readers that if Christ were living in 1917, "He would take bayonet and grenade and bomb and rifle and do the work of deadliness against that which is the most deadly enemy of his father's kingdom in a thousand years. . . . That is the inexorable truth about Jesus Christ and this war; and we rejoice to say it."[1] Shouted Billy Sunday, "If you turn hell upside down you will find 'Made in Germany' stamped on the bottom."[2] The denominations quickly organized for war work and responded with alacrity to requests for help from the federal government. In pulpits across the country Liberty Loan and food conservation campaigns were enthusiastically endorsed.

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[1] John L. Heaton, Cobb of 'The World' (New York, 1924), p. 270.

The churches also lent their support to the growing persecution of left-wing groups. Whippings and lynchings by private citizens and summary actions by public authorities were soon reported across the country. Before long the German-American community, too, became an object of public hatred. Labels were relentlessly shortened, to be summed up in one barbarous word: Hun.[3]

The German-American had held a position of favor probably second only to that of English and Scottish immigrants.

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[1] Quoted in Ray H. Abrams, Preachers Present Arms (New York, 1933), p. 68. Abrams' work is the most thorough and devastating survey of American churches in World War I.

[2] Abrams, p. 79.

[3] For overall coverage of this political and ethnic persecution, see Stanley Coben, A. Mitchel Palmer: Politician (New York, 1963); Donald Johnson, The Challenge to American Freedoms (University of Kentucky, 1963); Robert K. Murray, Red Scare (Minneapolis, 1955); H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, Opponents of War, 1917-1918 (Madison, 1957); William Preston, Jr., Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933 (Cambridge, 1963). For the historians' role in the persecution, see two articles in the American Mercury: Charles Angoff, "The Higher Learning Goes to War," XI (June 1927), 177-191, and C. Hartley Grattan, "The Historians Cut Loose," XI (August 1927), 414-430.

Now, suddenly, he found himself the object of suspicion, mistrust, and hatred. His origins were no longer alien, but enemy; his language no longer foreign, but un-American. His institutions became the agents of Pan-Germanic Kultur, of barbarism. By association alone, the Lutheran church was incriminated. But more, was not the Kaiser the head of the Lutheran church? And was not Lutheranism just another manifestation of over-bearing Germanism?

Of the major Lutheran bodies in the United States, the Missouri Synod was the most vulnerable to the charge of being un-American. In five states--Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Nebraska--the Synod was the third largest single denomination.[1] Especially in these states German was still the predominant language, both in church and school. No other group maintained so many parochial schools; two-thirds of the congregations supported their own school rather than trust their children to public education. Theologically, too, the Missouri Synod was on a collision course. Missourian pastors had traditionally refused fellowship without doctrinal unanimity. This position excluded, for instance, participation in non-denominational services, or even in public prayer. In addition, the Synod had long held to a rigid separation of church and state.

A deeply patriotic Missouri Synod pastor, then, might preach in German, teach in German in his parochial school, refuse to give sermons on wartime topics and decline to give the invocation at a patriotic gathering. He had done so without objections for years. But now, in an era that was to become notorious for its suppression of civil liberties, tolerance of such a minister and of his congregation became a luxury many Americans were willing to forego.

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[1] Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, I (Washington, D. C., 1930), 44-45.

Undeniably many in the Missouri Synod had not yet transferred their personal allegiance from Germany to America. Their support for their homeland, especially prior to 1917, demonstrates the relative level of pre-war acculturation in the Synod. By the same token, the scope and severity of the wartime attacks on German-American Lutherans make more understandable the responses and reactions within the Missouri Synod beginning in 1918.

2

The first general attack on German Lutherans came three months after war was declared. On July 11, "after the most solemn and serious investigation," the Nebraska State Council of Defense released a statement declaring that "never in history has it been deemed necessary by a public body to single out by name a great church or organization and appeal to the patriotism of its members to offset and check the dangerous tendencies of many of the conspicuous representatives of that organization. Because of the reliable reports that . . . come from every section of Nebraska--and come in number by the hundreds--it is necessary that the council make such an appeal . . . [to] the

Lutheran church."

The council specifically charged that bankers who invested in Liberty Loan bonds were threatened with withdrawal of deposits; that the sale of war bonds had been actively opposed; that Red Cross work had met with antagonism; and that the Lutheran church had failed to take a single step toward organizing for war relief--its representatives had, in fact, shown partiality for Germany.[1] Representatives of the Lutheran synods protested promptly in Nebraska and the Council of Defense issued a second, considerably milder, statement.[2] Lutherans, at least in the Missouri Synod, relaxed secure in a belief in American fair play and rationality.[3]

Summer turned into fall, 1917, and still there was nothing compared to the Nebraska charges to upset German Lutheran equilibrium. Things were so quiet that Lutheran Witness editor Martin Sommer could dismiss talk of a tax on German-language papers with, "what a cackle over an addled delusion!"[1] But, late in the year, ominous reports began circulating. During December a pastor in Idaho wrote of trouble regarding parochial schools there. One had been attacked, and another simply closed by the sheriff, who threatened to jail the pastor should he attempt to reopen the school.[2]

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[1] Much of the material in the following account is based on clippings and correspondence in the Theodore Graebner papers, deposited at CHI. These are identified by TG, followed by the appropriate box number. [St. Louis] Globe-Democrat, July 12, 1917; [St. Louis] Republic, July 12; Chicago Tribune, July 12, July 13, TG 122; Literary Digest, 1424 (Aug. 4, 1917), pp. 40-41.

[2] For an account based on Nebraska state sources of the attacks on the Synod in Nebraska, see Robert N. Manley, "Language, Loyalty, and Liberty," CHIQ, XXXVII (April 1964), 1-16. This study was published after my own work was completed. It adds additional documentation without altering any of my conclusions.

[3] The account in the Lutheraner was particularly casual. LXXIII (1917), 259.

The storm broke in January 1918. Everybody's magazine carried Samuel Hopkins Adams' "Wisconsin Joins the War," an article in a series which saw a spy or saboteur behind every hyphen. Adams mentioned the Lutheran church specifically in his indictment of the Wisconsin German-American community. He described German Lutheran clergymen who could hardly speak English and accused them of perpetuating German Kultur. Likewise, he said, the Lutheran common schools maintained the same Kultur. English was not employed outside of its own special classroom. "What bond," Adams asked, "have these people with Americanism?"[3]

When a Missouri Synod layman protested privately to the journalist, Adams replied, "in three of the Middle Western States including Wisconsin, the reply given by state and national officials to my query: 'What is the most troublesome element with which patriotic propaganda has to contend' was 'The German Lutheran Church.'" Hopkins added gratuitously, "had I chosen to devote more attention to that organization, I should have returned a far more sweeping indictment."[1]

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[1] LW, XXXVI (1917), 264.

[2] J. A. Schlichting to Graebner, Dec. 15, 1917, TG 122. Throughout this study, the citation "Graebner" is used for Theodore Graebner.

[3] P. 32.

The Sunday papers on January 13 contained a syndicated article by Professor Earl Sperry of Syracuse University which outlined the menace of German-American disloyalty. Sperry paid special attention to German Lutheran schools; their purpose, he said, was to propagate a foreign language and thus to aid a foreign state.[2]

In January, too, the Nebraska State Council again came forward with a report on foreign language schools in that state. According to the council, between two hundred and three hundred Lutheran parochial schools existed in Nebraska.[3] These schools were almost exclusively German. In fact, said the council, the German national anthem was sung in the German schools of three counties; in another county, children were flogged by their German school master if they spoke English in his classroom.[4] Acting upon the findings of this inquiry, the Nebraska State Council issued an order on December 12, 1917 flatly banning the teaching or use of foreign languages in the schools of Nebraska. The order was clearly illegal, and was recognized as such by members of the council. However, they could count on public opinion for enforcement.[1]

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[1] Copy of Adams to Edmund Seuel, Feb. 3, 1918, in TG 122.

[2] The [Pittsburgh] Gazette Times splashed the headline, "Tentacles of the German Octopus in America are Uncovered," over the story. See also the [Helena] Montana Record-Herald, April 5, 1918, TG 122.

[3] Of these, 171 were of the Missouri Synod. SYB, 1917, 161.

[4] Omaha Bee, Jan. 10, 1918 [?], TG 122.

The New York Sun picked up the Nebraska report and complimented the parochial schools in ironic fashion:

> It is to be said for the Nebraska German schools that thus far none of the more drastic measures for the suppression of other than the language of Kultur, as applied for instance in Poland, has as yet been adopted. In Poland little children who . . . replied to the Herr Professor in Polish were kicked and struck with the fist in the face. Sometimes they were knocked down with chairs. A jocular way of dealing with them was lifting them up bodily by the ears until the ears were half torn from the head. . . . In Nebraska the Herr Professors have as yet not adopted these methods. They only whip children who speak English in German schools.[2]

Later in the spring, the Philadelphia Ledger, too, took specific notice of the Missouri Synod in Nebraska. According to the Ledger, the Synod's parochial schools were an insidious method for the injection of German propaganda into Nebraska youth. It was a particularly Lutheran phenomenon because in the Catholic Church Cardinal Gibbons had already crushed similar leanings in the Cahensly movement. "No parochial school system could have been diverted from its primary purpose except . . . that most of the clergymen of the Missouri Synod came directly from Germany, where they were educated at the expense of the State. . . . Very few were naturalized; they love the Fatherland too much to desert it, even in name."[1]

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[1] Manley, p. 12.

[2] Feb. 20, 1918, TG 122. See also the Literary Digest, 1458 (Mar. 30, 1918), 29ff.

When a Milwaukee pastor was quoted in January to the effect that he preached in German because his congregation simply did not understand English, the New York Times commented, "there is just one real reason why the Milwaukee parson preaches in German. It is because he wants to prevent or delay the Americanization of his parishioners, and his device is highly effective for that deplorable purpose."[2]

3

By January the crusade against all things German had started in earnest. No respite for Lutherans appeared in the following months. In February a Texas pastoral conference was broken up and the authorities took several clergymen to town for questioning. A mob, complete with rope, drove a Missouri Synod pastor out of an Iowa county.[3]

March brought Scotch comedian Harry Lauder in a decidedly uncomic mood to St. Louis. During a patriotic address at the Coliseum, he told his audience that every German Lutheran church in the city was singing a German hymn of hate every Sunday morning. Synodical representatives pointed out that he was quoting a garbled translation of a minor poem published in an out-of-date annual of the Missouri Synod. Lauder partially retracted his statement, then moved on to

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[1] Dateline, April 13, 1918, TG 122; quoted in LW, XXXVIII (1918), 130. See also Santa Ana [Calif.] Blade, Jan. 10, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Jan. 23, 1918, 8:5.

[3] Memorandum, "Student Hingst," Feb. 18, 1918, TG 122.

Chicago where he told the Association of Commerce, "Stop the [German] magazines. I got my hands on a magazine when I was down in St. Louis. It is the Missouri Synod organ, the Calendar they call it, for 1917, and this was published in it. . . . This is the Synod organ of the German Lutheran Church in Missouri. . . . '[Christ] has become my gracious Savior/ To bayonet thrust he gives vigor/ the joy to aim, to pull the trigger./ My aid is Jesus, that I know/ onto the foe I gladly go.'"[1]

In southern Illinois--the same area in which a mob lynched a young German alien--a seventy-five year old Missouri Synod pastor was beaten, then tarred.[2] Churches at Steelville and Campbell Hill were forbidden the use of German by order of the town council. When a pastor appealed to the governor for protection, Frank O. Lowden replied, probably with good reason, that even militia could not fully protect the congregation. A month later a pastor at Pleasant Ridge, fearing imminent violence, fled to Arkansas.[3]

Also in April the Evening World-Herald of Omaha, Nebraska, headlined a story, "Lutheran Ministers Discountenance Loan." Five Missouri Synod pastors, invited to participate in a non-denominational service, had declined;

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[1] Globe-Democrat, March 25, 1918, March 27; [Milwaukee] Rundschau, April 3, 1918, 5:1-2; typewritten "Extract from Harry Lauder's Speech . . ." (source unidentified), TG 122.

[2] For details of the Robert Praeger lynching, see Stephenson and Fite, pp. 202-207.

[3] Memorandum, April 5, 1918; Republic, dateline April 6, 1918. Globe-Democrat, May 9, 1918, TG 122.

they noted, however, that they would be happy to take part if religious exercises were excluded from the rally.[1] The chairman of the county Liberty Loan committee excoriated the ministers in a public letter. "Your absence from this meeting and your excuse for not attending are important in but one particular," he wrote. "It shows the fathers and mothers and the friends of the boys 'over there' who are their enemies at home."[2] The senior pastor who signed the letter turning down the invitation was the object of condemnatory resolutions passed by other churches in Omaha. His house was painted yellow and shortly thereafter, fearing personal violence, he fled and his congregation accepted his resignation.[3]

Though violence was rare in the larger cities with their high percentage of foreign born, the outcry against German Lutheranism was such that Chicago congregations postponed church picnics. "The fear was expressed that if the Germans should win some great victory a day or two before their picnics, some might think they were celebrating the victory."[4] In New York City the American Lutheran Publicity

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[1] A German text of the letter was printed in the [Lincoln, Nebraska] Welt-Post, April 11, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Evening World-Herald, April 8, 1918. An editorial in the same paper the following day was equally strong. TG 122.

[3] Republic, April 12, 1918; Post Dispatch, April 11; see also J. M. Weidenschilling to Graebner, June 2, 1918, TG 122.

[4] E. F. Haertel to Graebner, April 25, 1918, TG 122. Various conventions were likewise cancelled in 1918. LP, XL (1918), 63.

Bureau, an agency maintained by Missouri Synod Lutherans, found it prudent to eliminate from tracts printed in 1918 the predominantly German names of authors. The government confiscated all remaining copies of a tract by Theodore Graebner, War and Christianity, presumably because it did not explicitly endorse American entry into the war.[1]

When the Literary Digest polled school superintendents about the country, the conclusion was nearly unanimous that in the elementary grades there was no place for German. Even in high schools, the language was being rapidly dropped.[2] That was in late March. Soon thereafter authorities began exerting state-wide pressure against any use of German. The Missouri Council of Defense established an honor roll "for every school, church, and organization in the state which will eliminate instruction and use of the German language."[3] Some Missouri towns were ready for more vigorous action. The pastor at Mount Leonhard found on his church door a notice threatening to burn down church and parsonage if German were not discontinued.[4]

In Montana, the council flatly prohibited use of German, including use from pulpits.[5] On May 23, Governor W. L.

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[1] AL, XXI (1938), 3427. Paul Lindemann to Graebner, June 18, 1918, TG 122.

[2] 1458 (Mar. 30, 1918), 29ff.

[3] Republic, dateline May 3, 1918, July 14, TG 122.

[4] W. R. Miessler to Graebner, May 8, 1918, TG 122.

[5] Oscar Heilman to Graebner, May 9, 1918, TG 122; LW, XXXVII (1918), 164.

Harding of Iowa, in an official proclamation, stated the following rules: "First, English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, denominational or other similar schools. Second. Conversation in public places, on trains, and over the telephone should be in the English language. Third. All public addresses should be in the English language."[1] The governor only made official what was already local condition. A Cedar Rapids minister had reported three weeks earlier: "This town is rabid. The board of education . . . kicked German from the schools, recommending to the governor that German preaching be ordered stopped. . . . When the tension became acute here, we dropped German in our school and discontinued its use also as pulpit language, anticipating the antagonism which had begun to be venomous from some quarters. I take care of my old people by means of gathering little groups."[2]

Two days after the Iowa proclamation, the South Dakota Council of Defense followed suit with its "Order Number 4." By that time Idaho and Oregon had also prohibited all languages but English. And Nebraska and Oklahoma were getting at the same purpose on a county by county basis.[3] Some county councils in Nebraska went so far as to obtain the names of members of German Lutheran congregations and specify who could hear German and who could not. In this way even families were split up. At Walthill, a home guard entered the church during the sermon and demanded in the name of the United States President that the minister stop preaching.[1] The Dixon County Council of Defense banned the use of German "on the streets, over the telephone, in all public places, in the church, and in the home." To be safe, the council also banned the reading of German.[2] The residents of Hooper, Nebraska, held a public burning of all German language text books, "a part of the insidious propaganda through which the German government sought to influence the people."[3]

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[1] A Proclamation to the People of Iowa (Des Moines, May 23, 1918), TG 122.

[2] N. P. Uhlig to Graebner, May 6, 1918, TG 122.

[3] "Order No. 4 of the South Dakota Council of Defense," May 25, 1918 (mimeographed), TG 122. LW, XXXVII (1918), 163, 188. El Reno [Okla.] American, May 30, 1918, quoted in O. M. Burkhardt to Graebner, June 1, 1918; J. M. Weidenschilling to Graebner, June 2, 1918, TG 122.

More Americanized Synodical officials tried to negotiate with state or county councils of defense. Usually, however, they found no room for any compromise. One pastor was told by a state council vice-chairman, "Why not discard your worship, your religion, for the duration of the war, put it on the shelf, and let us all have but one mind and purpose: that of serving our country, than which there is no higher service nor greater religion at this time." He added that the war would not last beyond four or five years and surely the Lutherans could get along without their religion for that short time.[1]

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[1] Testimony given before the Nebraska State Americanization Committee, reported in [Lincoln, Nebr.] Evening State Journal, Sept. 17, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Quoted in LW, XXXVII (1918), 164.

[3] Hooper Sentinel, July 18, 1918, TG 122. The Sentinel closed its report with, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants."

Instead of diminishing as the war approached its end, violence against Missouri Synod Lutherans only increased. One early September night, the parochial school at Independence, Missouri was redecorated in yellow, complete with slogans such as, "We cut out the Hun gab at the High School, why do we allow it here?" The next morning, while the minister and teachers watched helplessly from a distance, a troop of Boy Scouts broke the doors, took the U. S. flags from inside and put them in the windows. Later the same day a mob prevented a policeman from removing any signs.[2] Much the same thing happened at Montague, Michigan and at Lockwood, Missouri. At least two cases were reported that fall of schools being forcibly closed, even though German was no longer taught; one teacher was escorted out of town by well-armed men. A young ministerial candidate called to a congregation in Arkansas was threatened several times with violence if he accepted the call. The threats were not to be taken lightly, for his predecessor had been shot at.[3]

Respect for law seemed to have disappeared in some localities. When protests were made against Order Number Four to the Douglas County Council of South Dakota, the council said it did not care what the state council or the state or federal courts said, it would have no preaching in German.[1]

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[1] E. G. Jehn in LW, XXXVIII (1919), 9.

[2] Rudolph Graebner to Graebner, Sept. 16, 1918, TG 122.

[3] H. Grueber to Graebner, Oct. 2, 1918; A. Griese to Graebner, Oct. 10, 1918, TG 122. Memorandum, Oct. 5, 1918; P. L. Gabbert to Graebner, Nov. 3, 1918, Nov. 12, TG 122. Chas. Daeumler to Graebner, Nov. 4, 1918, TG 122.

Persecution finally reached its peak in arson. Early in September the parochial school in Herington, Kansas was burned down.[2] In October the school at Lincoln, Missouri suffered a "plain case of arson."[3] The climax occurred late in October when the school at Schumm, Ohio was dynamited.[4]

The campaign against things German, including the Lutheran church and school, had too much momentum to be abruptly halted even by the Armistice in November, 1918. In December, Captain George B. Lester of Army Intelligence testified before a Senate subcommittee that "'the word had gone down the line' to groups of Lutheran clergymen, that they were to preach sermons in favor of Germany; and that was done." He stated that one branch of the Lutherans in America was even subsidized from Germany. According to the captain, over 1,200 individual cases of German Lutheran pastors were investigated by federal authorities.[1]

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[1] Richard Neitzel to Graebner, Oct. 2, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Wichita [Kansas] Eagle, dateline Sept. 6, 1918, TG 122.

[3] H. M. Schreiner to Graebner, Oct. 9, 1918, TG 122.

[4] First reports in the Ft. Wayne [Ind.] Gazette, Oct. 21, 1918, stated the Schumm building was a church; see, however, J. R. Graebner to Graebner, Oct. 25, 1918, TG 122. According to Dr. Carl S. Meyer, whose father was pastor of the Schumm congregation at the time, other factors than simple wartime patriotism were involved. The German-American population of the county had recently helped defeat a public school bond measure. Interview, Jan. 7, 1964.

Representatives of the Missouri Synod joined officials of the other Lutheran bodies in a prompt protest, pointing out that whatever indiscretions might have been committed by German Lutherans, such people were acting from their German sympathies, not from Lutheran teachings. But by this time Lester's testimony had been well-publicized and the damage was done.[2]

In January, 1919, the school at Sweet Springs, Missouri was burned down.[3] In general, though, action shifted from local mob violence to concerted efforts for state laws to prohibit permanently the German language in the elementary grades. In the early months of 1919 such legislation came up in at least fifteen states--in population, well over a third of the country.[4] Of these, at least eight states passed language bills which varied from state to state. The Indiana and Nebraska measures prohibited teaching German and the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction; the

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[1] U. S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda, 65th Cong., 2nd and 3rd Sess., 1919, p. 1788.

[2] Brewing and Liquor Interests, pp. 1804-06.

[3] LW, XXXVIII (1919), 42. A few months later, a Missouri Synod pastor in Arkansas was visited by armed men and persuaded to leave. LW, XXXVIII (1919), 347. Ironically, the name of the town was Lutherville. In this case, however, there may have been more than anti-Germanism involved. See Fred Bangert *et al*. to Graebner, Jan. 18, 1920, TG 122.

[4] Calif., Ill., Ind., Iowa, Kan., Mich., Minn., Mo., Mont., Nebr., N. D., Ohio, Pa., S. D., Wisc.

Illinois law banned the use of a foreign language as medium of instruction in secular subjects only.[1] Even this was not the end, for especially in Michigan and Oregon, there were aggressive drives to outlaw parochial schools entirely. Only concerted action--and the help of Catholic and private school supporters--finally defeated these attempts.[2]

When he looked back on the months of the war, Ludwig Fuerbringer had good reason to write, "in the history of our church in this land, 1918 will never be forgotten. It was a year of oppression in many respects."[3] It was that and much more; how much more was not to become fully clear for years.[4]

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The hysterical patriotism, bigotry and violence on the home front during World War I do not form a very proud chapter in American history. Little can be said to justify the outrages against civil liberties which took place. But given the public temper, it is not hard to understand why the Missouri Synod was a popular target. In the charged atmosphere of the times, sentiment within the Synod before United States entry into the war made subsequent suspicions of anti-Americanism practically inevitable. Expression of Synodical pro-German feeling is the most striking testimony available about the current progress of the change in the Synod from immigrant to American.

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[1] Compiled from extended reports in *LW*, XXXVIII (1919), 52, 73, 86, 110, 117, 135, 152, 167, 184. In 1913 there were seventeen states with "some sort of provision requiring that instruction in the elementary schools should be in English." In 1923 there were 34 such states. Jesse K. Flanders, *Legislative Control of the Elementary Curriculum* (New York, 1925), p. 18.

[2] Erwin F. Vonderlage, "Saving the Private Schools: a Study of Pressure Group Influence on State Referenda in Michigan and Oregon" (unpublished Masters thesis, Washington University, 1958).

[3] *DL*, LXXIV (1918), 434.

[4] The above review of the anti-German Lutheran campaign is only an outline. Almost every pastor who lived through the war years has a fund of anecdotes of his experiences.

From the very beginning of the war in 1914, Missouri Synod Lutheran sympathy was overwhelmingly with the Central Powers rather than with the Allies.[1] The Abendschule, a fortnightly family magazine published by a Missouri Synod Lutheran and widely read within Synodical circles,[2] assured its readers that Germany was waging a just war. The war proved, moreover, how unrealistic the pacifists were: "as long as one nation is animated by a hunger for land and a lust for power (Russia), another by revenge and retaliation (France), and still another by greed and control of the sea and commerce (England), there will be discord, jealousy, strife, battles, and war."[1]

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[1] It bears emphasis that such sympathy with Germany was at the time no more un-American than the equally adamant support by American Anglophiles for Britain.

German-American attitudes and activities between 1914 and 1917 have been surveyed by James Clifton Child, The German-Americans in Politics, 1914-1917 (Madison, 1939); Carl Wittke, The German-Americans and the World War, 1914-1917 (Columbus, 1936); and, in Missouri, by John C. Creighton, Missouri and the World War, 1914-1917 (Columbia, Mo., 1947). The following is an outline of the activities and opinions in the Missouri Synod within the context of the German-American community as a whole as set out in these three books. I have not attempted to retrace German-American activity where there is no immediate connection with the Missouri Synod or its members.

[2] According to N. W. Ayer and Sons Newspaper Annual and Directory ([Philadelphia, 1917], p. 528), the Abendschule had a circulation of 50,000.

Late in 1914, the Abendschule featured stories on the German Emperor and Empress. A full page picture of each was reproduced, that of the Kaiser in color.[2] Wilhelm's face was a familiar one in the Abendschule. Once it appeared between portraits of Washington and Lincoln; another time flanked by the caption, "Mit Gott fuer Kaiser und Reich!" He appeared again when the Abendschule reprinted his message to the German people at the beginning of the war.[3]

News of the war and of related topics was not the sole concern of the Abendschule after August, 1914, but certainly European hostilities dominated the periodical's columns. Besides feature stories on all facets of the war, two pages of short paragraphs of news and comment on European developments appeared fortnightly under the heading, "Kriegsbilder." Poetry published in the magazine indicated the Abendschule's sympathies most concisely; titles such as "Deutsche sind wir--deutsch!," "Heil Deutschland!," "Sei stolz, dasz du ein Deutscher bist!," and "Hurrah, 'Deutschland'!," left little room for doubt about where the Abendschule stood.[4]

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[1] LXI (1914), 33. This triple indictment was a common one in German-American polemic. See Wittke, p. 7.

[2] LXI (1914), 240-241, 243. A few months later the magazine reprinted German ambassador Bernstorff's letter expressing appreciation for the "German Kaiser issue." LXI (1915), 417.

[3] LXI (1915), 449, 609, 618.

[4] LXI (1914), 112; LXI (1915), 520; LXII (1916), 431; LXIII (1916), 11.

Although the official publications of the Missouri Synod printed nowhere near the volume of war news and comment as the Abendschule, the Concordia Seminary faculty was not much more discreet than the Abendschule editors. In 1917, five of the eight professors at the St. Louis seminary had been born in Germany. The faculty was led by seminary president Franz A. O. Pieper, the foremost figure in pre-war Missouri Synod. Pieper was the only one of the faculty to have taught along side of C. F. W. Walther; in fact, he had been on the faculty fifteen years longer than any other professor.

Born in 1852 in Pomerania, Pieper completed the gymnasium in Germany before coming to America in 1870 with his brothers and widowed mother. He was one of a highly gifted family; one brother became a professor at the Springfield seminary, another became a leading theologian in the Wisconsin Synod, a third served as a pastor, and a fourth as a newspaper editor. By 1875 Franz Pieper completed his training at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. After only brief parish experience, he was called in 1878 to a professorship in systematic theology at the St. Louis seminary. There he remained until his death in 1931.

Pieper had impressive abilities and in the early 1880's distinguished himself in the defense of the Missourian position during a prolonged controversy with other Lutheran synods over predestination. By 1887, when Walther died, Pieper was ready to take his place as president of the seminary. In addition he was elected to the presidency of the

Synod in 1899, thus duplicating Walther's simultaneous incumbency in these pivotal offices. He resigned the latter presidency in 1911 because of ill-health, however, and visited Germany for the second time in order to recuperate.[1]

By the pre-war years, Pieper was the doctrinal systematician in the Missouri Synod; the climax of his work was a dogmatics, the first volume of which appeared, in German, in 1917.[2] Through his mental capacity, his writing and his unparalleled tenure of office, Pieper commanded a great deal of respect.[3] When, therefore, he referred in the Lutheraner to the war "in which Germany must fight for its life," his words reinforced natural inclinations within the Synod.[4]

From late in 1914 through 1915 the Lutheraner, like the Abendschule, printed "Kriegsbilder" as a wartime feature; anecdotes and commentary on the war, supposedly inspirational in nature, were gleaned from the secular press and from letters. As one might guess, the German side was consistently represented.[5] The Lutheran Witness did not lag far behind its German counterpart. A report of how the German emperor celebrated a quiet Christmas with his family appeared late in 1914. In February of the following year, the Witness reprinted German charges of Allied cruelty to German prisoners. A few months later editor Martin Sommer quoted panegyric of Hindenberg for two pages to prove that the German general was truly a Christian soldier. When Theodore Graebner asked in the Witness who was to blame for the war, he did not answer directly, but the only facts he advanced in lieu of an answer were that Russian troops had been mobilized before the Arch-duke Ferdinand was assassinated, and that Sir Edward Grey had not mentioned that the Germans had guaranteed Belgian neutrality provided Britain remain neutral.[1]

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[1] Theodore Graebner, Dr. Francis Pieper, A Biographical Sketch (CPH, 1931); LC, pp. 817-818.

[2] Though he was said to speak idiomatic English (Graebner, p. 57), none of Pieper's many important writings appeared originally in English.

[3] For posthumous appraisals by his colleagues, see Ludwig Fuerbringer, "F. Pieper als Theolog," CTM, II (Oct. 1931), 721-28, ibid. (Nov.), 801-806; W. H. T. Dau, "Dr. Francis Pieper the Churchman," ibid. (Oct.), 729-35; Theodore Laetsch, "Dr. Pieper als Prediger," ibid., 761-70.

[4] DL, LXX (1914), 270.

[5] See, for example, DL, LXX (1914), 368; LXXI (1915), 10, 129, 349.

The Germany which official Missouri Synod spokesmen defended, however, was not so much post-Bismarkian as geographically of the nineteenth century and intellectually of the sixteenth. The greatest German was Luther, and Germanism tended to be equated with Lutheranism. Pieper specifically rejected Pan-Germanism as "foolish."[2] "He who wants to learn of the German soul, and to feel the true German pulse," wrote Bente, "will not read Nietzsche's Zarathustra, but rather the writings of Luther."[3]

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[1] XXXIII (1914), 207. XXXIV (1915), 59. XXXIV, 253-254. XXXIV, 278-282.

[2] DL, LXX (1914), 270.

[3] LuW, LXII (1916), 130.

An emotional attachment to the Fatherland was not enough to induce Missouri Synod editors to overlook entirely their long-standing differences with German theologians. Pieper wrote in no uncertain terms of the godlessness in Germany, particularly, he said, that of its theological professors. He denounced the churches in Germany for preaching only religiosity, patriotism, and German culture instead of the Gospel. Particularly Friedrich Bente, editor of Lehre und Wehre, joined Pieper in such sentiments.[1]

Even wartime appeals to Pan-German patriotism were not enough to close entirely the theological gap between German and American Lutheranism, nor enough to overcome completely intellectual and social disparities within the German immigrant community. "The people who now intercede in America for truth and justice, and who also promoted the most German ways in the past," said Bente in 1915, "are not the beer-Germans, nor the theater-Germans, not the liberal-culture-Germans, not the exchange professors, not the national-organization-Germans, nor even the newspaper-Germans, but the school-and-church-Germans, especially . . . the Missouri Synod and its extensive school system." If Germany were less disposed to "liberalism and indifference," continued Bente, "it would be far better for the German-ness of her sons, when they leave the homeland for America. In Germany Lutheranism has been partly sacrificed, partly distorted and this is to be blamed for the fact that many Germans in America fall into the hands of the English sects and soon lose their German-ness." Concluded Bente, "The last German in America will be a Lutheran."[1]

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[1] DL, LXX (1914), 270. DL, LXXI (1915), 484. See LuW, LXII (1916), 267, where Bente speaks of this "religion" among Germans in America.

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As it became increasingly apparent in the fall of 1914 that the Allies--and not the Central Powers--were getting substantial amounts of war material from the United States, the German-American community concentrated on efforts to embargo munitions. Bills to implement such an embargo were introduced in the House of Representatives by Richard Bartholdt and Henry Vollmer and in the Senate by Gilbert Hitchcock during December of 1914. Early in 1915, the Abendschule printed a suggested form letter for readers to copy and send to their Washington representatives, urging them to support the embargo bills.[2]

To further mobilize public sentiment, American Neutrality Leagues, rather shadowy organizations with predominantly German and Irish backing, moved into action in Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis. In St. Louis a mass meeting was held on January 10, 1915. Concordia Seminary professors W. H. T. Dau and Friedrich Bente were prominent in the American Neutrality League and the latter was one of the speakers at the January mass meeting. Bente was there delegated to carry to Washington resolutions adopted at the mass meeting, condemning the sale of munitions.[1]

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[1] LuW, LXI (1915), 264-265.

[2] Child, pp. 42-52. Creighton, p. 89. Absl, LXI (1915), 357.

When Bente went to Washington late in January he had a busy schedule. On January 30 he participated in a conference which drew nation-wide comment. Neutralist senators, leaders of the German-American Alliance, of the German immigrant press and of German churches met to organize support for the embargo bills. This conference adopted the inevitable resolutions calling for an embargo and also formed an American Independence Union, apparently with the hope of winning support outside of German and Irish circles. Bente was chosen as an executive of this Union.[2]

On February 3, by the intervention of Senator William J. Stone of Missouri, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and sympathizer with neutralist sentiment, Professor Bente appeared before the Senate committee and read a statement in support of Hitchcock's bill. The day after the Senate hearing, Bente had an interview with

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[1] Absl, LXI (1915), 391; Globe-Democrat, Jan. 11, 1915, 3:2; Creighton, p. 91; Josephine Bente, Biography of Dr. Friedrich Bente (CPH, 1936), p. 30.

Another Missouri Synod clergyman, Rev. Richard Kretzschmar, was also active in the St. Louis branch of the Neutrality League but at the February 3 meeting protested vociferously against evidences of German rather than American patriotism obvious at the January mass meeting. Globe-Democrat, Feb. 4, 1915, 4:3.

[2] Absl, LXI (1915), 456; Child, p. 52; Literary Digest, 1295 (Feb. 13, 1915), 299-301. The Abendschule, LXI (1915), 647, did not specify what office Bente held in the new organization.

President Wilson. Here again he urged the case of embargo--apparently with results similar to his Senate appearance.[1]

This Washington trip was the climax, but not the end, of Friedrich Bente's tenure as a public figure. Later in February he returned to the East on Neutrality League business, this time for a conference at the International Peace Forum headquarters in New York City. In May he gave an address in Detroit.[2] Bente must have continued the work during 1915, for in May of 1916, when another important conference of German-American leaders was called in Chicago, he was again present. This convention adopted an eight-point "Chicago Platform," standing for neutrality and munitions embargo; the convention also appointed a committee to interview the presidential candidates and pass on their acceptability. Professor Bente was on this committee.[1] When Charles Evans Hughes was defeated in the 1916 elections, there was not much more that the German-Americans could do to influence national policy. At any rate, after his appointment to the Chicago committee, Bente's public neutralist career apparently ended.

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[1] The text for his statement for the Senate Committee is included in the account given by Bente's widow, pp. 30-42.

Bente felt after the Senate hearing that Senator Stone, at least, "was evidently impressed with the fact that, in protesting, we are actuated not by Germanism, but by motives moral and truly American." Bente, pp. 41-42. But Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, one of Bente's audience, sent off a different account of the hearings to Theodore Roosevelt:

> "The German-American propaganda has become pretty bad. We had them before the Foreign Relations Committee the other day on the question of prohibiting the export of munitions of war, when a man from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Louis, named Bente, addressed us. He had been born and brought up in Germany, and had come to Canada and become a British subject; then he had come to the United States, where he has lived for twenty years, and had become an American citizen. He had an accent so strong that you could tumble over it, and he proceeded to lecture us on Americanism, patriotism, what true Americanism was and what the opinions of George Washington were. Some of us are not hyphenates,--we are just plain Americans,--and the wrath of the members of the Committee, Democrats and Republicans, was pleasing to witness. I think they have overdone it. . . . They are now engaged in telling us how loyal they are to the United States."

Feb. 22, 1915, in Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1914 (New York, 1925), II, 457.

[2] Bente, p. 44. Absl, LXI (1915), 737.

Friedrich Bente's brief career as a public citizen is important not for its impact on national policy or even on the Missouri Synod. His Washington appearances certainly did not sway Senate Anglophiles; and, ironically, neither the Lutheraner nor the Lutheran Witness reported Bente's interview with the President.[2] Rather, Bente's career is important for what it demonstrated about the depth of sentiment for Germany within the Missouri Synod. Apparently without criticism from fellow Missouri Lutherans, Bente was able to engage in political activity unprecedented for a professor at Concordia Seminary.

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[1] Child, p. 126. In practice the committee had to interview only Republican candidate Charles Evans Hughes; Wilson's unacceptability to the German-Americans was obvious. Hughes refused to grant anything but a secret interview in New York City. Child, p. 136. Very likely Bente was not even present, for he was the only one of the original appointees who did not sign the report released by the committee. New York Times, Oct. 21, 1916, 3:1. See also Child, pp. 123-126.

[2] Presumably because he was technically acting as an individual, not as a representative of the Synod. Word of his activity did get around, however. Eighteen months after the event, the topic was still live enough that he addressed the 1916 California and Nevada District convention informally on the subject. LW, XXXV (1916), 275.

His colleagues on the faculty seemed not only to condone his action, but to support it. In the furor after the sinking of the Lusitania, the faculty--identifying itself not only as individuals, but also as the faculty of Concordia Seminary--dispatched a telegram to President Wilson. The message laid the primary blame for the disregard of international law on the Allies and urged that the incident not be used as basis for war. In February, 1916, seminary president Franz Pieper, Dau, and Bente signed another telegram to the President protesting the sale of munitions and the insistence that Americans could travel on Allied ships. Curiously, their chief argument was that in a future war, America would itself be limited to the principles Wilson was announcing in 1916. The three professors accused the President of sacrificing American rights and of disavowing his duty. The same three issued another protest in April, 1916.[1]

The Lutheran emphasis on the separate spheres of the church and state had been reinforced in the United States by the predominantly rural pattern of German Lutheran settlement and by immigrant preoccupation with the ethnic ghetto. A rigid division between the realms of the "two swords" became in the Missouri Synod one of the tests of true Americanism and orthodox Lutheranism.[1] This traditional position was what Pieper had in mind when he admitted in the Lutheraner that resolutions sent to the government supporting an arms embargo might seem like a mixture of church and state. They were not, he said, because anything that touches on moral issues is within the sphere of the church.[2] Such reasoning was vulnerable indeed in a church which refused to take positions on social questions, maintaining that its only task was to preach the Gospel. That Pieper was willing to use it, and able to do so uncontested, demonstrates again the depth of feeling for Germany in its contest with England, France, and Russia.

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[1] Absl, LXI (1915), 745. Absl, LXII (1916), 516. Bente, p. 45.

In spite of such sentiment for Germany, however, Missouri Synod Lutherans correctly denied that they were necessarily disloyal to the United States. J. T. Mueller, writing in the Abendschule, pointed to Muhlenberg, Pulaski, and Herkimer as examples of how German immigrants had faithfully served America in the past. In February, 1916, the Abendschule brought out an American nationalism issue.[3] Even this continued the attack on Anglophiles by using the slogan, "America First."

Thereafter the magazine used more sketches of American symbols to decorate its pages. As concisely as anyone J. B. Bernthal summed up in verse the German immigrant's answer to accusations of un-Americanism:

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[1] It may have been emphasized in America also partly in reaction to Reformed efforts toward blue laws and Prohibition.

[2] DL, LXXII (1916), 63.

[3] Absl, LXI (1915), 521. LXII (1916), 449-480.

We did not come as beggars
From our German Fatherland.
We had much with us
That was still strange and unknown here.
And when a beautiful crown of rich fields
Was created out of the thick woods,
Out of the desolate, monotonous wastes,
Germans were present there!

. . . .

Therefore, we stand proudly on this ground
Which our strength wrested from the wilderness.
Where would this Union be
If a German had never come here?
As in the days of the Civil War,
Indeed, at the first cry of peace,
We may say undisputed,
There were also Germans there![1]

Wilson's admonition to be neutral in thought as well as deed was rejected out of hand by Friedrich Bente, writing in Lehre und Wehre, and by Theodore Graebner, in the Witness. Thought and deed must be separated, they wrote, The Abendschule stated this position best when it declared that for German-Americans to sympathize with Germany was only natural--just as others might legitimately side with the Allies. In deed, however, all must remain rigidly neutral.[2] At this point, defense turned into offense, for, by trading in arms, said Missouri Synod spokesmen, the

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[1] "Der Deutschen Heimatsrecht in Amerika," Absl, LXIII (1916), 85. The reference to German troops in the Union army during the Civil War was not uncommon in German Lutheran apologetics.

[2] LuW, LXI (1915), 310-311; LW, XXXV (1916), 80-83. Absl, LXII (1916), 750.

United States violated this neutrality.[1] Franz Pieper flatly called the munitions export murder. Bente and Graebner agreed also that Americans who enlisted to fight in the Allied armies could be guilty of murder; Graebner included in this indictment the Irish who joined the Central Powers.[2]

Along with most German-Americans, Missouri Lutheran spokesmen protested alleged distortions in the Anglophile press.[3] They were especially exercised over the charges of barbarism leveled at Germany. Bente reacted most violently when he stated without qualification that it was Germany which was fighting for humanity and civilization, not only against the barbaric Russians, but also against the British with their exaggerated, self-conscious racial pride.[4] Actually, pointed out the Witness, the most "dastardly crime" of all was committed not by Germany, but by the Allies when they brought black colonial troops up from Africa as reinforcements.[5] Graebner ridiculed the "absurd" call being sounded in 1916 to go to war "for humanity." Nations do not go to war for humanity, he said; they go to war to protect their own interests. He illustrated this lecture in Realpolitik with examples from current American incursions in Mexico.[1] Early in 1917 Bente made his point about the relative barbarism of nations by reprinting a detailed tally of lynchings in the South during the previous year.[2]

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[1] See, for example, LuW, LXI (1915), 260; LW, XXXIV (1915), 230; 1916, 80-83, 126-128; Absl, LXII (1915), 2.

[2] DL, LXXI (1915), 445. LW, XXXV (1916), 85; LuW, LXII (1916), 446; LW, XXXV (1916), 279.

[3] LW, XXXIV (1915), 204, 278-282; Absl, LXII (1916), 530; LuW, LXIII (1917), 30-31.

[4] LuW, LXI (1915), 321.

[5] LW, XXXIV (1915), 167.

From all indications, the reaction of the St. Louis seminary faculty was a fair index of sentiment within the Missouri Synod as a whole. The English District was the most Americanized segment of the Synod; yet, when it met in convention in June, 1915, it promptly telegraphed to President Wilson resolutions favoring the arms embargo.[3] When the Abendschule sponsored a drive for the German Red Cross, the pastor of the Missouri Synod church in Madison, Nebraska, forwarded an amount from the congregation itself, rather than from individuals. Some Lutheran clergy printed the German flag crossed with the American on their envelopes. Lutherans also participated in boycotts of pro-British businessmen.[4]

The increasing possibility early in 1917 of American entry into the war brought eleventh hour efforts by Missouri

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[1] LW, XXXV (1916), 126-128.

[2] LuW, LXIII (1917), 79.

[3] LW, XXXIV (1915), 215. Apparently it was the only district to do so.

[4] Absl, LXIII (1916), 633. Envelopes from H. A. Hilpert, Pierce, Nebr., and J. Holstein, Plainview, Nebr., TG 122. J. M. Streckfuss to Graebner, June 10, 1918, TG 122.

Synod leaders. Late in February, Martin Sommer wrote the editorial, "Perilous Times," for the *Witness*. Though Sommer nowhere mentioned the name of any European nation, his sympathies were clear. "No Christian citizen of this country," he wrote,

> wishes to see it made a door-mat for the feet of other nations. *We cannot stand silently and idly by to see our country become a mere dog's tail to wag according to the humor of some other country*. . . . We must keep in mind that it is one thing to help our distressed fellow-man, but it is another thing to become his accomplice to folly or crime. We may help a bankrupt, but refuse to become a partner in his business. . . . It is plainly and distinctly the duty of our Government to be concerned for the welfare of America and Americans first and foremost . . . when we see how bankrupt nations desire to have us involved, so that we may pay their reckless debts, shall we stand by and say nothing?

Sommer told his readers it was their duty to bring their sentiments to the attention of Washington.[1]

In the East, pastors William Schoenfeld and Frederick Wilhelm of New York City went to Washington on March 19 and 20 to gather information on the situation. They had a long interview there with Senator Stone,[2] and returned to New York to distribute a circular letter pointing out that England was as guilty as Germany of violations of international law and that there were leaders in Congress who did not see war as unavoidable. The two pastors stated that "Congress must be informed by the people over against the war clamor of the press that they see no warrant for our declaring war against Germany, without taking like action against England, and that they insist a way out of the present crisis can be found without loss of honor." Those who remain silent, said the letter, "must be held equally responsible with those who by their clamor might bring on war."[1] As late as April 4, ten or twelve Missouri Lutheran pastors went to Washington to lobby against war.[2]

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[1] *LW*, XXXVI (1917), 47. Italics in original.

[2] A leading neutralist senator and one of the "little group of willful men," who had filibustered Wilson's ship arming measure earlier in March. Creighton, pp. 171-172.

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The declaration of war caught German-American Lutherans in an awkward situation. How awkward was illustrated by the Milwaukee Rundschau, a fortnightly German newspaper widely read in Synodical circles, though not official. The very issue of the paper which announced the war also contained an article quoting the Kaiser on the German-ness of Luther and emphasizing the Reformer's contributions to German history and culture.[3]

Both the Rundschau and the Abendschule greeted the American declaration of war with sober, but apparently loyal, editorials. Under the headline, "The Die is Cast," the Milwaukee paper stated, "the duty which will be laid upon us is heavy; doubly heavy for those of us bound by blood ties with the country now declared enemy by the resolution of Congress." But, declared the Rundschau, German-Americans had only one duty and that was to their adopted land.[1] In St. Louis, the Abendschule said that the German-Americans "have fought a good fight to keep peace in this land; since . . . Congress declared war, however, they understood the obvious; what the representatives of the American people decide is binding on the nation and there can be no more if's and but's." The Abendschule bluntly warned German-Americans to hold their tongues about United States entry into the war and to do their duty as loyal citizens.[2]

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[1] March 23, 1917, TG 122.

[2] Wilhelm to Graebner, April 4, 1917, on reverse side of circular letter, Mar. 23, 1917, TG 122.

[3] April 11, 1917, 7:4.

Simply because the United States finally entered the war against Germany does not necessarily make the activities of the German-American community before April, 1917 any less loyal than the actions of those whose sympathies were with the Allies. The true test of loyalty came after American entry into the war. And at first the Missouri Synod seemed to be failing that test. If there were few signs of active opposition to the war effort, there were also few signs of energetic participation in the mobilization of American resources.

When it first took notice, on an inside page, of American entry into the war, the Lutheraner made no mention of Christian civil obedience. A cool statement emphasized the separation of church and state and concluded that the Lutheraner--and Missouri Synod pastors--would not trespass on the preserve of the state, kindle passions of war, or give all kinds of unwanted advice.[1] The Abendschule filled the columns vacated by "Kriegsbilder" and a series on German generals with features not on the American war effort, but on the national parks and on farm topics. Some Missouri Synod leaders had argued too long for Germany to readily admit that America was fighting a just war, one that a Christian could participate in. An apparently not uncommon view was expressed privately by Pastor Theodore Horst, when he wrote that "the present declaration of a state of war was forced upon Congress by our Chief Executive, . . . [and it] was declared against the will of the people."[2]

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[1] April 11, 1917, 6:5.

[2] LXIII (1917), 714.

Martin Sommer in the Witness took a middle ground when he wrote, "we cannot follow every police officer about to tell him just when and upon whom and at what moment . . . he is to use his gun, nor can we examine in each case all the detail of diplomatic and documentary evidences which justify war at any particular time for any one government."[3] The Witness editors were willing to take the government's word that there was provocation for a just war. Some of the Lutheraner staff, however, were not so sure. The tension between the two positions was to grow and was ultimately to strain relations on the seminary faculty and within the Missouri Synod as a whole.

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[1] LXXIII (1917), 133.

[2] Horst to Graebner, Jan. 23, 1918, TG 122.

[3] XXXVI (1917), 125.

The Witness and Lutheraner were in agreement, though, against requests by the government that ministers declare June 3, 1917 a Liberty Loan Sunday and preach sermons on that topic. The government was roundly berated for its attempt to "harness the Church to a campaign for the sale of war bonds." This, according to the Witness, would not fail to breed contempt for that bulwark of religious freedom, the separation of church and state.[1]

At the 1917 synodical convention in July, William Schoenfeld, who a few months earlier had circulated the last minute appeal for staying out of the war, prepared a long resolution protesting the mixing of church and state. The final paragraphs provided for release of the resolution to the public and presentation to President Wilson. Fortunately for the future of the Missouri Synod, the resolutions never got to the convention floor.[2]

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[1] LW, XXXVI (1917), 239; DL, LXXIII (1917), 198.

[2] Early in 1918, Schoenfeld forwarded a copy of the resolutions to Graebner, explaining,

> "These resolutions were drawn up at Synod in Milw. [aukee.] Praeses Pf[otenhauer] had received a letter from the . . . [Baltimore?] Conf.[erence] asking for a declaration by Synod anent the matters referred to in the Resolutions. Said letter he turned over to the Com., of which I was chairman. Re question at issue I discussed with [Wm.] Dallmann, [W. H. T.] Dau, [Theo.] Engelder, [L.] Wessel, and then formulated these Res.[olutions.] Pf.[otenhauer], however, first deferred action and then on the last day declined

As promotional material for the second bond drive in October, 1917 went out from Washington, the Witness again protested about the use of churches in the drive; it also reprinted complaints about Herbert Hoover's request that the churches say something concerning the conservation of food.[1] The most fully developed statement occurred the same month in the Magazin fuer Ev.-Luth. Homiletik. Concordia Seminary professor George Mezger agreed with the Witness and Lutheraner against sermons on wartime topics. Although the pastor must inform his parish what God's Word says about war, wrote Mezger, he should refrain from concrete application to the present situation. Whether or not this country is waging a just war is up to the individual conscience. And, concluded Mezger, the question will be decided in such a variety of ways that the pastor should not bring it into the pulpit.[2]

Official periodicals thus reinforced the pre-1914 view of church and state--as well as German sympathies within the Synod--to exclude Lutheran congregations as such from active participation.[3] Except for articles deal-

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presentation, saying: It would look like taking a slap at the Administration and then adjourning." N.d. [ca. March 13, 1918], written on back of New York Catholic War Fund circular letter, March 12, 1918. See also typewritten copy of resolutions, TG 122.

[1] XXXVI (1917), 303, 357, 337.

[2] XLI (1917), 467-78.

[3] This did not, of course, prohibit Lutherans as private citizens from taking part in bond drives, patriotic festivals, flag celebrations and the like, and there is no

ing with the establishment of a chaplaincy corps and for editorials against mixing church and state (which together make up a very small percentage of Witness and Lutheraner columns), it would have been hard to tell, particularly from the Lutheraner, that the United States was engaged in a major war. The Witness paid so little attention that a Cincinnati reader complained, "couldn't you possibly work in a quotation that would lead a sharp man to suspect that you would like to see the United States win this war with Germany?"[1]

Interpreted by an untactful pastor, this official silence could lead to potentially damaging incidents. For instance, when a clergyman in Kansas City was asked over the telephone for help with a Red Cross campaign, he curtly answered, "My pulpit is only for the Gospel," then hung up.[2] But what official silence would mean was clearly recognized in St. Louis. Wrote Mezger, "It is entirely possible, indeed, probable, that our church will be much slandered for its position. We will be denounced as unpatriotic, as disloyal, etc.; it may be that God will permit us to be persecuted for it. Then we must suffer. In doing so, we have a clear conscience before God, and know, moreover, that we are

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reason to believe that many Missouri Lutherans did not participate in such.

[1] Ralph Richman to Graebner, June 13, 1917. For similar sentiments, see Wm. Stuckert to Graebner, Aug. 29, 1917; and H. Saeger to Graebner, Dec. 27, 1917, TG 122.

[2] W. Hallerberg to Graebner, Jan. 8, 1918, TG 122.

showing ourselves to be true patriots, as citizens who seek and further the best for this land."[1]

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[1] HM, XLI (1917), 469.

CHAPTER III

PATRIOTISM UNDER PRESSURE

By the end of 1917, the Missouri Synod had not established a propitious record. At worst, by word and action, Synodical spokesmen verged on demonstrations of explicit German patriotism. At best they attempted to maintain official neutrality and silence in a country engaged in a major war. Supporting this neutrality were apparently fixed principles in line with tradition, stated authoritatively in the Synod.

In such a setting, the December 25, 1917 issue of the Lutheran Witness had the impact of an anarchist's bomb. The lead editorial in this issue abruptly reversed previous pronouncements regarding the war and Lutheran participation in it. Entitled, "Stop, Look, and Listen," the editorial began innocently enough by calmly reporting several recent events: a Missouri Synod parochial school in Chicago was now displaying a service flag; in South St. Louis, parochial school children paraded to Holy Cross school and there heard public speakers on the Red Cross work; teachers at Holy Cross were selling war stamps to their classes; Trinity congregation, one of the oldest in the Synod, had resolved to buy a war bond.

Then came the blow, phrased in terminology virtually unknown in the official English organ of the Missouri Synod: "The Lutheran Witness applauds the action of Jehovah School in Chicago and of the schools of South St. Louis. Let others be guided by their example." To back up this statement the Witness offered an argument that emphasized expediency, but included a few statements of principle. Editor Graebner noted that some people were saying, "No one can attack our Americanism! No one can demand that I prove my loyalty!" Such talk, he said, was "utterly foolish." "In times of war there is no sense in appealing to logic or to stand on principles which are theoretically very true . . . [for instance,] that no man has the right to doubt the loyalty of a Lutheran. Unless protestations are followed up . . . by some kind of action, they will appear hypocritical, no matter how sincerely meant."

So long as it does not hinder the "free preaching of the Law and the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments guaranteed by the Constitution," the government does have the right, according to the Witness, to enlist the aid of the churches. "There is no reason why the churches shall not give even part of the time of worship to hear those communications which the Government desires to bring to the attention of the churches. We cannot expect our neighbors to understand the reasons derived from custom and tradition which render such accommodation a real sacrifice."

The Witness concluded there was much the schools and various church societies could do which involved no surrender of the principle of separation of church and state.[1] Just exactly what the Witness meant was outlined in an article by the Walther League Board for the Army and Navy, a committee recently appointed by the youth organization. Suggested were congregational service flags, honor rolls, and flag ceremonies. Young people were told to organize regular correspondence with boys in uniform and to hold open houses if military bases were in their vicinity. Mailing packages to those overseas and general assistance to the Red Cross was also encouraged.[2]

In issues following this Christmas editorial, the Lutheran Witness, and particularly editor Theodore Graebner, were to go much further. Once having made his commitment, Graebner was to become the most vocal lobbyist for energetic participation in the war effort. Of the second generation in his family to be born in this country, Graebner was decidedly American, rather than German, in his outlook. His father had been a pioneer in the use of English in the Synod until his death in 1904. On a visit to Europe in 1906, Graebner had toured Germany and had reacted strongly against what he thought was German arrogance.[1]

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[1] XXXVI (1917), 406.

[2] Ibid., 404.

If nothing else, he was an aggressive activist ever ready to needle his church with a sharp pen to get it moving as quickly as possible in the direction he thought proper. "When a new situation arises," he wrote his brother, "the majority can . . . almost absolutely be counted upon to be dead in the wrong."[2] He once sarcastically recommended as emblem for the Missouri Synod "a rooster violently flapping his wings and crowing lustily at the setting sun."[3]

Easily excitable, Graebner even in his forties had a tendency toward impulsiveness. He tended to view situations in dramatic terms. Once having detected a problem--and he did not shrink from the search--Graebner took it more seriously than some and was also readier to continue to publicize it. Both in nature and in statement his solutions were likely to be uncompromising. He rarely expressed himself with reservations; an opinion was strongly held or not voiced at all. Excitable, aggressive, articulate--the mixture was a volatile one, especially in the editorship of the official English organ of the Missouri Synod.[4]

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[1] Theodore Graebner, Testimony and Proof (CPH, 1918), pp. 24-27; Graebner to W. Stuckert, Sept. 2, 1917, TG 122.

[2] Graebner to Martin Graebner, March 4, 1919, TG 41.

[3] LW, XLIII (1924), 482.

[4] Graebner was also a meticulous worker with a strong sense of history. His files have been preserved (ca. 160 MS boxes) and in both importance and bulk far outweigh all other manuscript sources for the Twenties combined. It is

Reaction to the Witness editorial, "Stop, Look, and Listen" was strong and swift. Comment came from both sides. A layman from Illinois thanked the editors and asked that the Witness also print the reasons for American entry into the war. "My motive for asking this is that one still hears Lutherans sneeringly remark that they don't know what we are fighting for."[1]

On January 3, Missouri Synod president Frederick Pfotenhauer wrote to express disapproval. The president said he had been happy that Lutheran churches had not followed the example of the "sects" by dragging in the war. Besides, wrote Pfotenhauer, "many of our members do not approve of the war." Encouraging congregations to demonstrate their patriotism and enthusiasm would violate the conscience of these members. Pfotenhauer was not willing to censure congregations which placed service flags in their churches, but he did not want to encourage such activity.[2]

Graebner replied promptly that he had gone ahead with the editorial without telegraphing Pfotenhauer because the Walther League Board had told him its program had the

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lamentable that there are no other comparable collections to provide additional perspectives and correctives. Since there are not, however, one has no choice but to rely heavily on the Graebner papers. Used with caution, they provide clues unobtainable elsewhere to what was going on in the Synod between 1917 and 1929.

[1] W. J. Wente to Martin Sommer, Dec. 30, 1917, TG 122.

[2] 3 Jan. 1917 [misdated, should read 1918]. Day cited before month indicates MS is in German.

president's approval.[1] Furthermore, said the editor, unless attitudes in the Synod were changed there was going to be real trouble at the third Liberty Loan drive. He admitted that theoretically there was a mixing of church and state; just as there is, he reminded the president, in the office of military chaplain. (This argument was prudently dropped in later discussion.) Then Graebner shifted ground neatly to argue that the state was approaching churches not as religious bodies, but as corporations to which it had granted charters. The editor was sure enough of his position to ask Pfotenhauer himself to write an article giving congregations the guidance they needed in this matter.[2]

Pfotenhauer refused his request. Congregations do not want to be told by their pastor or anyone else about how they should participate in the war, said the president. Such an article would only disturb the peace of the congregations.[3] The wartime persecution was the first major crisis during Pfotenhauer's administration, but his conservative reaction was characteristic. By 1918 Frederick Pfotenhauer had been president of the Synod for seven years. He was born in the kingdom of Hanover in 1859. His father, a clergyman, died while he was quite young and after several years at Friedrich Brunn's Proseminary at Steeden, Germany,[1] Pfotenhauer came to the United States as a boy of sixteen to continue his education at the preparatory school in Fort Wayne, Indiana. At the Fort Wayne school, German was still the language both of instruction and conversation. In 1877 Pfotenhauer moved on to the seminary in St. Louis; there he studied under C. F. W. Walther and Franz Pieper.

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[1] While this was true (G. W. Polack to Graebner, Dec. 11, 1917, TG 122), the excuse was a feeble one, for Graebner had gone beyond the Walther League's program.

[2] 4 Jan. 1918, TG 122.

[3] 6 Jan. 1918, TG 122.

Upon graduation in 1880 Pfotenhauer returned to Germany for a visit before taking up his duties as a Reiseprediger, a traveling missionary, in the Dakota and Montana territories. On the frontier Pfotenhauer worked hard to preserve for Lutheranism the German immigrants who were settling in the area. The life was difficult, however, and Pfotenhauer's health broke under the strain; to recover he returned once again to Germany. In the meantime he had married Helene Brauer, who, though born in America, had grown up in Germany. After returning to the United States in 1887, Pfotenhauer accepted a call to a more settled part of Minnesota, and began a steady climb in Synodical officialdom. By 1908 he was a vice-president of the Synod, and in 1911 he became the first full time president.[2]

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[1] Brunn was a Lutheran pastor who had broken with the state church. In 1860 C. F. W. Walther persuaded him to open a school in Germany to help supply the Synod with ministerial candidates. Boys were usually trained for a year or two at Steeden before being sent on to Fort Wayne. See Ebenezer, ed. Dau, pp. 467-470.

[2] E. A. Mayer, "Dr. Friedrich Pfotenhauer," CHIQ, XIII (April 1940), 1-21.

Frederick Pfotenhauer gave fatherly rather than charismatic leadership to the Missouri Synod. During his tenure the Synod moved steadily away from local and regional autonomy toward ever-increasing centralization; but Pfotenhauer himself was not an innovator. Quiet and reserved, he usually expressed himself in pastoral rather than administrative terms. He was acutely sympathetic to the needs of the German immigrants. Pfotenhauer was anxious to avoid giving offense to fellow Christians, but this concern may have disposed him to recognize the offense given some by drastic action more readily than offense given others by lack of action. In any case, his was a difficult task, for in an era that required new responses, there were few precedents to guide a man who was unwilling to assume more authority than had been explicitly delegated by the congregations to the Synod or by the Synod to the presidency.

In spite of Pfotenhauer's predictable disapproval, the first issue of the Witness in 1918 pushed even more energetically for participation in the war effort. The same issue carried reprints of letters thanking the Witness for "Stop, Look, and Listen," reports from around the country about active congregational work (reports which Graebner had thoughtfully requested privately late in December),[1] and a spirited reply to Samuel Hopkins Adams' article in Everybody's.

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[1] E. C. Fackler to Graebner, Dec. 31, 1917; O. Kreinheder to Graebner, Dec. 29, 1917, TG 122.

Many were still not convinced, however, "A citizen's loyalty is taken for granted," wrote one pastor, "just the same as it is taken for granted that he will not strangle any babies. What would people tell you if you tried to make them sign a pledge to that effect?"[1] Pastoral conferences in Oregon and in New York also disagreed and requested an explanation. In answering them, and in his later editorials, Graebner developed further the rationale for congregational participation in war work. He leaned heavily on the statement that congregations were not being approached as religious groups, but as chartered corporations, entities which the state had every right to address. The state could even, for example, take over churches to use as hospitals, as it had taken over railroads to coordinate shipments of war materiel. Furthermore, nothing contrary to Scripture was being asked. Sermon topics were not made mandatory, only suggested. The effect desired by the government could be reached without necessarily incorporating a war topic into the sermon. In the current situation, the Lutheran church had no choice but to participate, for the government had a close eye on the Missouri Synod and popular feeling was continually growing more rabid.[2]

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[1] L. List to Graebner, 11 Jan. 1918, TG 122.

[2] Letters by Graebner to L. List, n.d. [ca. Jan. 11-15, 1918]; K. Schmidt, 15 Jan. 1918; F. P. Wilhelm, 12 Feb. 1918; and J. A. Rimbach, Jan. 16, 1918, TG 122; LW, XXXVII (1918), 22, 42, 77.

The pragmatic nature of Graebner's stand was clearly illustrated in 1919 after the war was over. The Witness

In order to provide theoretical underpinnings for his central point regarding congregations as corporations, Graebner called on Carl Zollmann, a graduate of the Springfield seminary, who had just completed American Civil Church Law for a Columbia University doctorate.[1] In his Witness article on the dual character of congregations, Zollmann confirmed Graebner's conclusions with legal citations.[2] Thanking Zollmann, Graebner wrote, "Our case now is watertight. Hereafter pastors and congregations which do not become active in affairs requested of them as a means of reaching the citizenship, will not be able to plead 'separation of church and state.'"[3]

2

"While the Witness blows the war trumpet," wrote one pastor to another early in 1918, "the Lutheraner shows by its silence that one should not become entangled in war

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once again came out against government requests for announcements from the pulpit and for special Sundays. Wrote Graebner, "when the fire department drags a line of hose up my stairs and through my bedroom to gain a vantage for fighting a fire in my neighbor's house, I may find the arrangement unpleasant, but will submit, and even assist. But that does not mean that I shall permit the department to store its supply of hose in my parlor the year around." LW, XXXVIII (1919), 57.

[1] (New York, 1917).

[2] LW, XXXVII (1918), 100-101.

[3] Graebner to Zollmann, Mar. 31, 1918. See also Graebner to Zollmann, Mar. 11 and Mar. 20, 1918; Zollmann to Graebner, Mar. 18, 19, and 21, 1918, TG 122.

work. Therefore I do nothing for the Red Cross."[1] The dead silence of the Lutheraner was no accident. It was a policy dictated by a conservative group on the seminary faculty, a group apparently led by Franz Pieper. Utterly opposed to any mention of the war in church papers, the conservatives maintained editorial control of the Lutheraner. Reviewing their attitudes toward the war, Graebner wrote his brother-in-law,

> early in 1917, before war was declared, I wrote an item for "Chronik" [a department in the Lutheraner], asking our people to guard their lips and to give no one cause for doubting our Americanism. This item was refused space. I submitted it again in June 1917 and in the fall of 1917 again asked that some expression on war problems be given to our readers. . . . Soon I got reports from Iowa proving that our people had taken a very moderate interest in the Second Liberty Loan. . . . A little later I observed a tendency among many of our pastors to resent all requests from the government as interference with the duties of pastors and churches. . . . Pretty soon the word "disloyal" was used in the secular papers about the Lutheran ministers. Then I wrote "Stop, Look, and Listen" [for the Witness].[2]

Given the personalities and issues involved, the clashes within the faculty must have been violent. Pieper bluntly told Graebner that because of the Witness editorials, all respect for the faculty had vanished, that Graebner had caused more shame than even the unionists--a very strong piece of name-calling indeed at a time of church mergers which Missouri spokesmen were denouncing.[1] The St. Louis pastoral conference sent a delegation to the faculty asking that the Lutheraner speak out, but the conservatives refused to budge.[2] With the Lutheraner sabotaging the efforts of the Witness, the Synod was bound to be badly split. The Lutheraner was the traditional voice of the Missouri Synod, speaking, as it had always spoken, in German. The Witness, after all, had been an official organ of the Synod only since 1911. In circulation alone, the Witness was outclassed; the Lutheraner had double its subscription list.[3]

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[1] Heschen [?] to Wm. Hallerberg, quoted in Graebner to F. Pfotenhauer, 8 April 1918, TG 122.

[2] Graebner to R. H. C. Meyer, Sept. 27, 1918, TG 122. The "reports from Iowa" are a puzzle. None are extant in the Graebner papers, nor does such a report occur in the fall, 1917, issues of the New York Times, the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, or the Post Dispatch. Nathaniel R. Witney, in The Sale of War Bonds in Iowa (Iowa City, Iowa, 1923), does speak of ethnic opposition, but only in a very general way. See p. 93.

The controversy finally came to a head in mid-April. The anti-German campaign was by then in high gear. Whether swayed by this or by some other reason, President Pfotenhauer came to St. Louis and met with the faculty. Vice-president Frederick Brand got up from a sick bed to join Pfotenhauer. At the meeting, "Brand spoke plain American and emphasized the duty of papers to lead public opinion in this church. . . . he said, omission to do this is '*eine*

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[1] Graebner to F. Pfotenhauer, 26 Feb. 1918 (marked, "not sent"); Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 8 April 1918, TG 122.

[2] Graebner to R. H. C. Meyer, Sept. 27, 1918, TG 122.

[3] See circulation chart, p. 145. A split between the two periodicals was sensed by readers as early as 1916. John Graebner reported to his brother that at the Ft. Wayne pastoral conference it was said, "as soon as the Witness came out with a good thing, the Lutheraner followed with a dose of cold water." Dec. 5, 1916, TG 122.

Suende' and said the situation was so threatening that 'unser ganzes Werk steht auf dem Spiele.'" Finally, the faculty made Ludwig Fuerbringer responsible for the entire policy of the Lutheraner with the understanding that he would follow Brand's advice.[1]

Already in the April 8 issue of the Lutheraner--the first after Zollmann's article on church-state legalities--Fuerbringer had endorsed an appeal from Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo. Fuerbringer emphasized that the government came to the churches as legal entities, just as to secular organizations, clubs, and associations. That was the opening wedge in the Lutheraner. The real break came in the first issue after the St. Louis meeting. Fuerbringer and Pfotenhauer had long editorials, both reprinted in English. In essence, both men restated the basic arguments of the Witness. Fuerbringer not only suggested patriotic activity, but requested it. Pfotenhauer asked that pastors notify him of Lutheran purchases of war bonds; the Treasury Department had officially requested such information from him.[2]

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[1] Graebner to R. H. C. Meyer, Sept. 27, 1918. See also Graebner to F. Pfotenhauer, 26 Feb., 8 April 1918; F. Brand to Graebner, 16 April 1918; Graebner to Brand, 21 April 1918, TG 122.

It is unfortunate that much of this battle may be seen only through the eyes of Theodore Graebner, but neither the Pfotenhauer nor the Brand papers on the matter are extant. The St. Louis pastoral conference minutes for this period are also lost.

[2] DL, LXXIV (1918), 143-144. A report form was furnished to congregations with blanks for Red Cross, members in the armed services, Third Liberty Loan, War Stamps, and

In his late April and subsequent editorials, Pfotenhauer abandoned his own earlier position. He explicitly sanctioned patriotic speeches by pastors and insisted that the deciding factor was local circumstances.[1] With the prestige of the Synodical president and the Lutheraner behind patriotic activities, Missourian pastors at last had some defense against the censure of their more conservative colleagues--men who would discount anything not to their liking in the Lutheran Witness. Until Pfotenhauer came forward, a pastor who took part in a Red Cross drive, for instance, might feel the displeasure of other clergy and of his older congregational members.[2] Even after the April statements by the Lutheraner, talk continued about pastors shunning persecution which should be their lot as Christians.[3]

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Early in April also, Pfotenhauer wrote to Graebner, suggesting that the Witness editor get out a tract to counter the prevailing notion that the Missouri Synod was

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so on. It was bluntly titled, "What Have the Members of Your Congregation Done for War Purposes?," TG 122.

[1] DL, LXXIV (1918), 143-144, 164, 210, 390.

[2] Letters to Graebner from Theo. Andres, Nov. 19, 1918; J. H. Mueller, Jan. 9, 1918; F. J. Lankenau, May 24, 1918; J. M. Streckfuss, June 10, 1918; H. H. Koppelmann, June 17, 1918; H. Grueber, Oct. 2, 1918, TG 122.

[3] F. C. Gade to Graebner, Nov. 2, 1918; Graebner to C. Hafner, April 25, 1918, TG 122; LW, XXXVII (1918), 168.

connected with the German state church under the Kaiser. Apparently, the president went so far as to sketch out what he wanted.[1] The ultimate answer to his request was a thirty-two page three-by-five tract, Testimony and Proof bearing on the Relation of the American Lutheran Church to the German Emperor.[2] The "testimony" was an April 11 speech in Springfield, Illinois, by Vice-president Frederick Brand, annotated by Graebner. Brand explained the 1817 Union of Lutheran and Reformed groups in Germany. Though the Kaiser was the head of this United Church, said Brand, since the Union was not Lutheran, neither was the Kaiser. Furthermore, the Union Church and the Missouri Synod were bitter foes; in fact, the forefathers of the Synod had fled Germany to escape the Union. Finally, many Missourian Lutheran boys were proving their patriotism by serving under the colors.[1]

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[1] See Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 8 April 1918, TG 122.

[2] (CPH, 1918). Published late in April (according to Graebner to F. Brand, 21 April 1918, TG 122), the tract was quite successful. The first edition of 10,000 was sold before it was printed. (Graebner to Brand, May 8, 1918; Graebner to C. Hafner, May 7, 1918, TG 122). A week later, 50,000 copies had been distributed. (Graebner to Hermann Hagedorn, May 15, 1918, TG 123). In all, 86,000 were printed, but 5,400 remained undistributed and were disposed of in 1923. (Information from CPH records, supplied by Dr. Elmer Foelber, July 12, 1963). For even greater circulation, portions were reprinted in the Witness. (XXXVII [1918], 150-151) The tract served as the basis of a release sent out by the Friends of German Democracy (a German-American group linked with George Creel's war propaganda office in Washington, D. C.) to some five thousand papers and key individuals. (J. F. E. Nickelsburg to Graebner, June 1, 1918, TG 123). See New Yorker Staatz Zeitung, June 1, TG 123; Bay City [Mich.] Times-Tribune, May 2; Topeka [Kansas] Capitol, May 19; Santa Ana [Calif.] Register, quoted in E. Rudnick to Graebner, June 6; Wichita [Kan.] Eagle, May 20; Lincoln [Mo.] Chronicle, June 6, TG 122.

The "proof" in Testimony and Proof consisted of quoted extracts from German polemic against the Missouri Synod, and from Synodical writers on patriotism. A few extracts--notably one by Graebner himself from 1906--roundly abused German "Lutheranism" and Germany itself. The tract focused argument particularly against the alleged connection between the Kaiser and the Missouri Synod. Such a connection was not exactly the chief charge leveled at the Missouri Synod during the war, but denying its truth was a shrewd defense. The Missouri Synod did not have a leg to stand on when it came to the much more central question of language, and Graebner knew it. The best defense was to shift attention from use of the German by protests of loyalty and by denials of affiliation with Germany. There was, however, yet another reason for Testimony and Proof.

When Pfotenhauer requested a tract from the Witness editor, he had in mind something to defend the Missouri Synod from its enemies. When Graebner wrote Testimony and Proof, he had in mind something to defend the Synod from itself: "Our people need to be told that we have never held any briefs for the German emperor and his state-church system."[1] Very likely the same motive was present when Brand spoke and wrote about Pan-Germanism. While defining for non-Lutherans the evil influences of German nationalism, he was simultaneously informing Lutherans to what they were susceptible and against what the Missouri Synod fought, or should fight.[2]

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[1] Beginning in August, both the Lutheraner and the Witness printed the number of Missouri Lutherans in the armed services. DL, LXXIV (1918), 269; LW, XXXVII (1918), 241.

There was honest doubt in the Missouri Synod. Probably many pastors were in the dilemma of the one who wrote to the Witness editor in 1917. He wanted to "do his bit" for the war effort, but what about the separation of church and state? A woman in the East asked if having an American flag in church was mixing church and state. Pastors inquired similarly about ringing church bells during a bond drive.[3] But it is undeniable that Missouri Synod Lutherans were slow to abandon German loyalties. The separation of church and state was a convenient escape for those who desired to maintain neutrality in a country at war.

In some parishes there was a real need for statements from St. Louis on the gravity of the situation and upon the Missouri Synod's differences with Germany. A congregation near Evansville, Indiana refused to drop German when advised to do so by its pastor, even though faced with mob action. Some promised to protect the minister; others threatened to quit the church. The congregation included at least one man who had served in the Kaiser's army.[1] When a pastor in Kansas pleaded with his congregation for more English and greater patriotism, he was told, "*Niemand hat ein Recht, uns zu sagen, was wir sprechen wollen; wir sind deutsch und wir bleiben deutsch.*"[2] Some pastors were simply forced to resign when they felt English had to be introduced.[3]

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[1] Graebner to H. M. Zorn, May 29, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Brand delivered another speech in Springfield, July 22, reprinted in LW, XXXVII (1918), 261, and again, 313.

[3] Letter fragment from E. H. Reuter, Dec. 28, 1917. Weigand to Graebner, Dec. 3, 1918. Graebner to E. F. Haertel, April 13, 1918, TG 122.

After a school had been painted yellow in Kansas, it was noted that the congregation had been particularly vehement in resisting the introduction of English.[4] Defense of the parochial school system was not made easier by German-Lutheran action in some localities where they held a voting majority. Lutherans had been known to block all proposals to improve the public school system, especially in parts of Oklahoma and Nebraska.[5] Though he denied it publicly, Theodore Graebner was privately unsure whether or not "*Deutschland ueber Alles*" was sung in some schools in the plains states.[1]

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[1] Memorandum, apparently of a case in which the seminary faculty's opinion was requested, May 13, 1918, TG 122. Much the same thing happened in Cleveland, H. M. Zorn to Graebner, May 13, May 24, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Memorandum, Sept. 27, 1918, TG 122.

[3] E. Heinemann to Graebner, Nov. 3, 1918, TG 122.

[4] G. Weinrich to Graebner, Oct. 2, 1918; Martin Graebner to Graebner, Sept. 28, 1918, TG 122.

[5] Martin Graebner to Graebner, May 17, 1918; [Lincoln, Nebr.] *Evening State Journal*, Sept. 17, 1918, TG 122.

Indiscretions were certainly not limited to the laity. Two pastors of the Baltimore conference were so pro-German that they stopped unpatriotic talk only when their colleagues threatened them with formal action before public authorities.[2] In Kansas, one minister told another, "*Ich hasse dieses Land, ich bin jetst 25 Jahre hier, aber ich hasse dieses Land*."[3] After attending a pastoral conference in South Dakota a pastor wrote, "if the government had had clever detectives out on the lawn, a half dozen of our ministers would now be at Leavenworth."[4] A Missouri Synod pastor in that state who had collected actively before the war for the German Red Cross, later refused to do anything for the American Red Cross.[5]

Dangerous sentiment was found even among Synodical officialdom. J. J. Bernthal, president of the Western District, one of the Synod's largest, was quoted as saying, "When I receive a letter or a memorandum from the government, I just throw it out."[6] At the 1918 North Dakota and Montana District convention, when some of the pastors insisted on a loyalty resolution, they were at first opposed, the consciences of some being urged as a reason the district should not pass a resolution. In the meantime, apparently with the help of Synodical vice-president J. W. Miller, a watered down resolution was quietly prepared and run through the convention by dubious means.[1]

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[1] Graebner to John Herzer, July 7, 1918; Graebner to Theo. Engelder, July 14, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Memorandum, quoting "Rev. Schueler," Sept. 28, 1918, TG 122.

[3] Memorandum, Oct. 3, 1918, TG 122.

[4] F. C. Gade to Graebner, Nov. 2, 1918, TG 122.

[5] *Ibid*.

[6] "*Was ich an Briefen und Zetteln vom government bekomme, das werfe ich--wo's hingehoert*." Memorandum, Sept. 28, 1918, TG 122.

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Such pro-German sentiment was admittedly extreme even for the Missouri Synod; it dramatizes, however, in what direction the distribution of loyalties in the Synod was skewed even during the war. It also elicits more respect for the task which President Pfotenhauer faced: he had to lead a group attacked from without and split within. He compounded his difficulties, however, by attempting to do the job with a traditional administrative structure. His office of presidency was the only one in the Missouri Synod devoted full time to administration and public relations. The sole concession to wartime needs was the authorization at the 1917 triennial convention of a committee to handle military chaplaincy matters. Pfotenhauer appointed Pastors D. H. Steffens and J. Frederic Wenchel of Washington, D. C.

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[1] J. P. Klausler to Graebner, July 1, 1918, TG 122. The Witness editors refused to publish the resolution which was passed. Graebner to Klausler, July 14, 1918, TG 122. For more about Miller's activities during the war, see J. R. Graebner to Graebner, May 10, 1918, TG 122.

as part of this committee.[1]

What might have been ample staff under normal conditions was not sufficient in the situation facing German-American Lutherans in 1918. By April of that year, Witness editors Sommer and Graebner suggested the establishment of a new, full time office, to counsel congregations in specific instances and to represent the Missouri Synod to non-Lutherans.[2] Pfotenhauer responded to these overtures by delegating more responsibility to the Washington office.[3] "He does not admit that our entire Synodical machinery has broken down," complained Graebner to a friend.[4] The Witness editor also wrote of having to answer hundreds of letters because the clergy did not know the Synod's course.[5]

Whether or not he ever admitted that Synodical government had broken down, sometime in late April or early May Pfotenhauer took steps toward establishing an information agency. Frederick Brand was named head; Professors Louis

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[1] Pro., 1917, 35; DL, LXXIV (1918), 210.

[2] The suggestion might also have been made by others, but there is no such evidence extant. Such an office, according to available evidence, was originally suggested by Martin Graebner. See Martin Graebner to Graebner, Feb. 4, 1918; Graebner to F. Brand, 10 April 1918; Graebner to F. Haertel, April 13, 1918; Graebner to Brand, May 8, 1918; L. Wessel to Graebner, May 31, 1918, TG 122.

[3] Graebner to F. Brand, 21 April 1918, TG 122; LSSB, II (March 1919), 9-10.

[4] Graebner to F. J. Lankenau, May 18, 1918, TG 122.

[5] Graebner to W. C. Kohn, 19 May 1918, TG 122.

Wessel and Theodore Engelder of the Springfield seminary were also appointed, though they declined at first to serve.[1]

By April 1918, Pfotenhauer had thus come a long way from his January letter to Graebner against congregational participation in war work. Perhaps he had come unwillingly, but he had nevertheless come. The role of Witness polemic in his conversion, though, should not be over-estimated. As president of the Synod, Pfotenhauer traveled extensively and must have had an intimate knowledge of conditions about the country.[2] Pfotenhauer may have been conservative and deliberate, but he was not blind. By April the anti-German campaign was in full swing; events left no doubt that unprecedented measures were required.

When the district presidents assembled at St. Louis on June 5 to assign calls to graduating ministerial candidates, the German Lutheran persecution also was on the agenda.[3] After hearing reports from each of the presidents, the group encouraged Pfotenhauer to broaden the scope of the new information board and form a Synodical War-Time Bureau. The presidents wanted a bureau to represent congregations before state officials, to prepare propaganda and combat slanderous reports, and to advise individual congregations on the course of action best suited to local conditions.[1]

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[1] W. C. Kohn to Graebner, 17 May 1918; Theo. Engelder to Graebner, 10 May 1918; Graebner to F. Brand, May 20, 1918; Brand to Graebner, May 31, 1918, TG 122.

[2] See W. C. Kohn to Graebner, 17 May 1918, TG 122.

[3] The Lutheran Laymen's League forwarded a resolution recommending that the presidents "take a positive stand in asserting and evidencing the loyalty of our church body and its members; also to advise their respective parishes in these serious times to carefully distinguish between essentials and non-essentials, bearing in mind particularly that the German language, except perhaps in some localities, is non-essential; and to caution their constituency not to delay proper action." The resolution had been drawn up by a committee including laymen Benjamin Bosse, Henry Horst, William Boehne, Synodical treasurer Edmund Seuel, and Witness editor Martin Sommer. LLL Min., June 3, 1918.

The meeting recommended "that at least one person be delegated who is to give his entire time to the work of this bureau; that an office be rented for him in a centrally located city, and that adequate office help be provided for him, and no expense spared to make the work of his office efficient, prompt and comprehensive."[2] War against Germany had been declared fourteen months earlier and against German-American Lutherans at least six months previously. Here, at last, was decisive action to defend the Missouri Synod.[3]

To the staff originally appointed by Pfotenhauer was added Prof. Richard Neitzel, also of the Springfield seminary faculty. Headquarters was set up at that seminary. By the middle of July the bureau had issued its first Bulletin.[1] In this, its first general release, the bureau was specific that where anti-Lutheran propaganda had made headway, pastors should not hesitate to give patriotic addresses. The unfurling of a service flag was pointedly suggested as a suitable occasion for a speech. "If necessary," added the bureau somewhat grimly, "a suitable occasion can be created."[2] To help in speech making, the bureau included paragraphs for patriotic addresses.

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[1] See Graebner's notes on the presidents' reports, TG 122. For the War-Time Bureau, see LW, XXXVII (1918), 184, 218; DL, LXXIV (1918), 210; F. Pfotenhauer to Graebner, 14 June 1918, TG 122; Synodical War-Time Bureau Bulletin No. 1 (n.d., n.p.), p. 1.

[2] Bulletin No. 1, p. 1

[3] The same meeting authorized immediate steps to change the name of the Synod to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. LW, XXXVII (1918), 263; Pro., 1920, 30; Ver., 1920, 82. The new name was sanctioned by the new constitution adopted by the 1917 triennial convention for ratification by the congregations of the Synod. However, the name change at this 1918 meeting of presidents was almost certainly a war measure, protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. See DL, LXXIII (1917), 246.

Simply establishing a Synodical War-Time Bureau did not end the Missouri Synod's troubles, of course. The situation had deteriorated too far to be remedied overnight even had the Synod placed all its resources behind the bureau. And all Synodical resources were not put at the bureau's disposal. In fact, the district presidents' recommendations were not carried out. Apparently no full time official was secured. Nor was the bureau given adequate financial support. "We cannot even subscribe to important periodicals unless we pay for them with our own cash," complained secretary Neitzel.[3]

Furthermore, opposition to the bureau's program remained strong even in the summer of 1918. In its second Bulletin,[1] the bureau still found it necessary to warn Missouri Synod Lutherans not to succumb to righteous indignation nor to withdraw if accused of disloyalty. Pernicious Pan-German propaganda had made such accusations inevitable; therefore, the Bulletin warned, tacit loyalty was not enough. In addition, the bureau complained openly of the lack of cooperation in forwarding to it the advice and clippings requested in its first release.[2]

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[1] Theo. Engelder to Graebner, June 29, 1918; Graebner to Engelder, July 2, 1918; Engelder to Graebner, July 4, July 10, 1918; Graebner to Engelder, July 14, 1918, TG 122.

[2] P. 2.

[3] Neitzel to Graebner, Sept. 19, 1918, TG 122.

Finally, the War-Time Bureau was hampered by operating under the same advice Pfotenhauer acted upon: activities to counter anti-Lutheran propaganda were best carried on without publicity.[3] We keep things quiet, explained Neitzel, so as not to ruffle the composure of "500 or 1000 ministers who would probably disagree with us. Some of them are undisturbed because in their community outsiders seem to understand their position, while others are already doing the very thing we advise, but would throw up their hands in horror if they saw their own position in print."[4]

Ever the agitator, Graebner shot back, "THEY NEED IT

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[1] Judging from a letter, Graebner to L. Wessel, dated Oct. 11, 1918, Bulletin No. 2 was issued after that date. TG 134.

[2] See also R. Neitzel to Graebner, Sept. 19, 1918, TG 122.

[3] Graebner to F. Brand, July 30, 1918; W. C. Kohn to Graebner, 17 May 1918, TG 122.

[4] Neitzel to Graebner, Sept. 13, 1918, TG 122.

MOST."[1] Perhaps to Graebner's surprise, Neitzel replied in a personal note warmly thanking him for his letter. "Perhaps it will help take the ball and chain off our feet," wrote the secretary of the bureau. Neitzel complained at length of opposition and of opportunities not seized.[2]

Fortunately, some of the districts took the initiative in meeting the situations they faced. Five districts established their own committees. Of these, the greatest success was scored in Nebraska and Kansas.[3]

F. W. C. Jesse, of Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska, took an active part in the Synod's defense in that state. In the fall of 1918 the governor named him a member of the Nebraska State Americanization Committee. This committee held hearings which publicized the grievances of the state's foreign-born. Outmaneuvering the State Council of Defense, the Americanization Committee brought in a relatively mild resolution on the use of foreign languages.[4] In Kansas, Martin Graebner, a teacher at the preparatory school in Winfield, was also exceptionally active. Perhaps because of his legal training, Graebner gained contacts among Kansas authorities. After working for some months unofficially, he was ultimately appointed to the Kansas State Council of Defense.[1]

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[1] Graebner to Neitzel, Sept. 18, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Neitzel to Graebner, Sept. 19, 1918, TG 122.

[3] The five districts were Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Wisconsin, and South Wisconsin. Neitzel to Graebner, Sept. 13, 1918, TG 122. Little was heard of the Wisconsin committee outside of that state. For Iowa, see O. H. Horn to Graebner, June 5, 1918, TG 122.

[4] [Lincoln, Nebr.] Evening State Journal, Sept. 17, 1918; [Lincoln] Nebraska State Journal, Sept. 17, 1918; Lincoln [Nebr.] Daily Star, Dec. 18, 1918, TG 122.

In addition to these war committees there was a spate of loyalty resolutions passed by districts at patriotic celebrations held in conjunction with district conventions. Beginning with the Atlantic District, at least nine out of twenty-one districts in North America passed patriotic resolutions in the spring and summer of 1918.[2]

What further evolution the War-Time Bureau--and patriotic activities--would have undergone had the war continued is impossible to say. But the history of the Synodical War-Time Bureau was one of tardy, inconclusive Synodical leadership. The danger facing the Missouri Synod was recognized too late and combatted ineffectually by those in power, with the single exception of Vice-president Frederick Brand. The Missouri Synod was capable of far more efficient administration and aggressive leadership.

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[1] LW, XXXVII (1918), 331. For other activity in Kansas, see Den Amtsbruedern und Gemeinden des Kansas-Distrikts zur Nachricht (n.p., n.d.), a small brochure including a report of a meeting, April 30-May 1, 1918, as well as advice, sent to Kansas District pastors, TG 122.

[2] Atlantic, Northern Illinois, South Dakota, Michigan, English, North Wisconsin, Texas, Nebraska, North Dakota. LW, XXXVII (1918), 149, 201, 223, 232, 248, 264, 281, 293; J. P. Klausler to Graebner, July 1, 1918, TG 122. This does not count a number of more or less local Lutheran loyalty demonstrations. See, for example, LP, XL (1918), 49.

In this same period the Synodical Board for Army and Navy, authorized in 1917 to provide spiritual care for Missouri Lutherans in the military, demonstrated the Synod's true potential. The board collected over a half million dollars, and bought equipment and twenty-four automobiles for the two hundred-odd clergy engaged in military work. It distributed tracts, sermons, and hymnals by the hundreds of thousands and issued its own monthly periodical with an average circulation of 30,000--somewhere between that of the Witness and Lutheraner. The board erected buildings and maintained a headquarters with up to twenty clerks working full time to keep track of more than 37,000 Lutheran soldiers.[1] But the Synod had yet to care for its public image and future as it cared for its members forced to leave the safety of the Lutheran community.

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After the Armistice, the Missouri Synod attempted to regain its pre-war equilibrium. In January, 1919, quiet, but determined, moves were made to replace Sommer and Graebner as Lutheran Witness editors. Although Pfotenhauer denied he personally was motivated by the Witness's stand during the war, very likely this was involved.[2] Opposed by

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[1] Pro., 1917, 35; DL, LXXV (1919), 89; SYB, 1918, 110; LW, XXXVII (1918), 408; Ver., 1920, 108.

[2] Compare Pfotenhauer to Graebner, 29 Jan. 1920 (TG 69) with Pfotenhauer to Fuerbringer, 31 Dec. 1919 (Pfotenhauer Papers).

Graebner's energetic lobbying, the decapitation efforts failed.[1]

For other American Lutheran bodies, the experience of war work led to the formation of the National Lutheran Council, the first successful effort to coordinate the work of nearly all the Lutheran synods in America. Among American Catholics, the National Catholic War Council evolved into the permanent National Catholic Welfare Conference.[2] In the Missouri Synod, however, the War-Time Bureau was disbanded promptly after 1918 and the Synod refused to authorize the continuance of the Board for Army and Navy to care for Lutherans who remained in the armed services during peacetime.

Yet, despite the blundering of Synodical officials during the war, and despite efforts to retrench after the war, in the end the Synod found that the war experience blocked a return to the halcyon days before 1914. The Synod found itself instead unceremoniously hurried into twentieth century America. World War I marked the end of one era and the beginning of another.[1]

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[1] See Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 28 Jan. 1920; Pfotenhauer to Graebner, 29 Jan. 1920; Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 30 Jan. 1920; Graebner to Karl Kretzmann, Feb. 14, 1920; Graebner to O. L. Hohenstein, Feb. 23, 1920; Karl Kretzmann to Graebner, Mar. 5, 1920; E. T. Lams to Graebner, April 20, 1920; Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 6 June 1920, TG 69; Graebner to A. C. Bode, June 26, 1919, TG 122; O. A. Geisemann to Graebner, June 16, 1920, TG 61; Pro., 1923, 72.

[2] John Tracy Ellis, American Catholicism (Chicago, 1955), pp. 138-41.

The symbolic end of the immigrant Missouri Synod came in 1917 with the sale of the Pilgerhaus, the immigrant mission headquarters, on Manhatten.[2] But the suspicion, mob violence, and legal harassment of 1917-1918 insured that the war would be more than simply a symbolic marker. It became the most important single event in the process from German to American. Though in some ways the war acted as a depressant, it was also a powerful stimulant toward a speeding up of acculturation.

The war alone did not, of course, cut off immigration. The influx from Germany had been dwindling since 1892, and with it, potential constituency for Missouri Synod congregations.[3] Yet there was no event until 1914 to focus attention on the decreasing number of Germans coming to the United States. As long as some immigration continued--even if it were to Saskatchewan instead of to Cincinnati or St.

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[1] It may be, though, as Carl S. Meyer persuasively argues, that in theological matters, the Synod was in the midst of a period opened by C. F. W. Walther's death in 1887 and not to be closed until 1932 with the "Brief Statement," a recapitulation (noted for its conservatism) of the Synod's theological position. See "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement,'" CTM, XXXII (July 1961), 403.

[2] Pro., 1917, 35-36; DL, LXXXV (1929), 21. A missionary did remain in the city to aid the relatively few immigrants who disembarked.

[3] 1892 was the last year that more than 100,000 German immigrants entered the United States. By 1895 the figure was down to 32,000; there was no long term rise before the war. Historical Statistics, p. 56.

Louis or Iowa--there was nothing to bring home the fact that the end of the ethnic community was not generations away.[1] Nothing, that is, until World War I. The war brought home, as nothing else could, that the Missouri Synod's mission to the German immigration was all but finished.

A continued supply of new immigrants was the lifeblood of the German-American community. The newcomers helped resist the corruption of the German spoken in America. They reinforced European attitudes within the group and renewed ties with the Old Country. By continually augmenting the German-American community, they concealed defections and also helped reduce the chances that the young would have to go outside ethnic boundaries to find a job, a friend, and a spouse. For the German-American who had been here many years, the newcomer may have been laughable, but he was nevertheless a mirror in which the old immigrant could see himself years before. The newcomer was in many respects the norm by which the old immigrant could measure his fidelity to his heritage.

The loss of this norm through steadily decreasing immigration accelerated an inevitable erosion in the German-American community. Faced with the loss of its traditional constituency, the Synod had to broaden its missionary outreach or stagnate.[1] Unfortunately, just at the time when the Missouri Synod was being restricted in missionary field to native Americans, the Lutheran church was being popularly identified as disloyal, and the use of any German was changed from morally neutral to un-American. The unprecedented pressure of anti-German sentiment accentuated for the immigrant the polarities between the Fatherland and America. Even for the Americanized second or third generation, as Ruth Suchow recalled in the American Mercury, "the war was the first thing to make me realize that I actually came of German ancestry."[2]

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[1] The marked decline of German immigration was even more obscured by the tremendous rise in overall immigration to the United States. Between 1905 and 1914, the annual influx exceeded one million six times. Historical Statistics, p. 56.

The denunciations of Germany as barbarous and bloodthirsty, and the identification of God with democracy and the Devil with Germany increased any sense of alienation of the immigrant from American life. It also insured that the Missouri Synod would not be a part of the unification of American denominational efforts during the war and after. The persecution during the war caused many Lutherans to be even more reticent than usual about their church affiliations, and thus even less effective missionaries. One of the reasons given for a New Jersey Lutheran Week celebrated in 1920 was "to awaken people out of their silence and inactivity caused by the war."[1]

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[1] The transition of missionary expectations from German diaspora to Americans at large went on throughout the Twenties. As one of the most important aspects of immigrant church acculturation, it is studied in more detail in Chapter V.

[2] "A German Grandfather," XII (Sept. 1927), 280.

The war acted as a depressant in other ways. 1917 was the four-hundredth anniversary of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses and the first centennial to be celebrated by Missouri Lutherans in America. The festival was eagerly awaited and plans for it were matured well in advance. Illustrated lectures were prepared; mass events anticipated; and a special collection projected.[2] But American entry into the war introduced indecision and confusion into what was to have been a moment of triumph for German Lutherans in America.

Had it been held even a year earlier, such an anniversary would have been a time for the German-American Lutheran community to emphasize the union in blood as well as faith with the Old Country, to reaffirm their identification with Luther, the greatest German author of them all.[3] It would have been a time to glory in Luther's shaping and use of the German language--and to plead for its perpetuation in America. It would have been a time for the second or third generation to recall ethnic loyalties, and for the first generation to instruct the young in the heritage brought from Germany.

The war altered such emphasis and seriously dampened the enthusiasm of the celebration.[1] It caused long faces and pessimistic talk at the 1917 triennial convention of the Synod.[2] The Germanophile attitude was the thinly-disguised target of an editorial in the Lutheraner, printed soon after U. S. entry into the war. In spite of the war, 1917 was still a jubilee-year, declared Graebner; it was never a part of the Synod's festival plans to celebrate Luther as a German. We should hold celebrations in spite of the war because it is our duty to witness to God's message in the Reformation, the writer told Lutheraner readers.[3] The war made it necessary to emphasize Luther's stand against Rome instead of his nationality, to stress his contributions to American religious freedom rather than to German culture, and to congratulate Missouri Synod Lutherans on their orthodoxy rather than origins.

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[1] LW, XXXIX (1920), 314. The overcoming of this reticence and the role of church publicity in the Synod is discussed in Chapter VI.

[2] DL, LXXIII (1917), 18-20, 52, 67, 102; LW, XXXVI (1917), 21, 169.

[3] LuW, LXII (1916), 130.

The quadricentennial celebrations did give the most Americanized segment of the Missouri Synod the impetus to introduce in more aggressive terms the Lutheran church to Americans at large.[4] However, in terms of this publicity outside the Synod, much of the good done was nullified by the 1918 accusations aimed at the more German majority of the Synod.

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[1] W. G. Polack, "The Founding of the Lutheran Laymen's League and the First Years of Its Activity," CHIQ, VI (April 1933), 2.

[2] LW, XLIII (1925), 165.

[3] DL, LXXIII (1917), 129.

[4] The best illustration is the history of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau. See AL, I, 1 (1918), 1, and Chapter VI below.

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Yet, the depressive effect of the war, though important, was less significant in final result than the war's catalytic action. The most directly involved in the war were, of course, the thirty-seven thousand Lutheran men who served in the army and navy.[1] Probably no melting pot functions with such brutal efficiency as army life. Even the Missouri Synod itself was forced to aid in the process of acculturation; when Ludwig Fuerbringer listed various prayer books in the Lutheraner, suggesting that one be sent with a New Testament to every soldier, all of the choices were in English.[2] The Synod's chaplains wrote about the open complaints by those not trained to use English in their religious life; apparently for some, a camp service was the first time they had participated in an English worship service.[3] Certainly not all of these soldiers returned to their home congregations demanding an English ministry, but at the very least they had been exposed to English in worship and were the more likely to support it at home. They were also more likely to be impatient with the closed nature of ethnically-oriented social and church life.

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[1] There is no Synodical record of any conscientious objectors. The more American sympathies of the younger generation were reinforced by the Lutheran position on duty to the state.

[2] DL, LXXIII (1917), 229.

[3] AL, I, 10 (1918), 2, 14; IV (1921), 85.

Pastors selected to help serve Missouri Synod soldiers and sailors represented the younger and/or English District segment of the clergy, but the wartime experience either pushed them further toward English work or strengthened an already existing conviction that the Synod must quicken its transition to English.[1] Ten years later American Lutheran editor Paul Lindemann could still remember vividly the bitter complaints of some Lutheran soldiers whose pastors "had not even equipped them to participate in the [English] religious services."[2]

The war affected more than the six or eight percent of the Synod's laity and clergy directly involved. It is hard to imagine a cause that could receive more general support in the Missouri Synod than the spiritual care of its men in the armed forces. Even those who did not think the war was just could stand behind an effort to keep Lutheran young men in the fold. Thus the Board for Army and Navy united both German and English elements in the Synod behind what was essentially English work. The Synod was induced to make a major effort in a new direction when the possibilities of dissent were minimal.[3]

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[1] Interviews with former camp pastors J. C. Baur (May 21, 1963) and Alfred Doerffler (March 8, 1963). See list of camp pastors, LW, XXXVII (1918), 316.

[2] AL, X (1927), 144.

[3] Criticism of the Board for Army and Navy did exist, though it is uncertain just what specifically was attacked. Reports of its work in the Lutheraner were usually rather

The Board for Army and Navy had an enormous impact on the Synod in matters other than language. The board's appeal to loyalty (both American and Synodical), and the methods it employed prompted Lutheran charity as nothing had previously. In less than eighteen months the board collected for its work more than the total annual budget of the Synod in 1918. Its successes--and methods--opened eyes in many circles of the Synod to the untapped potential, and served as an introduction to the rationalization of administration and fund raising during the Twenties.[1]

Traumatic as it sometimes was, the war occurred at probably the most opportune time in the history of the Missouri Synod. By 1917, too large a portion of the Synod was ready to shift from immigrant to American for the progress of acculturation to be turned back after the war. The war gave acculturation a strong impetus; thereafter the movement steadily picked up speed. Language was the first to be strongly affected, but the educational system quickly became involved as well. Missionary orientation and organizational life, including the status of clerical leadership, and fund raising, were influenced more slowly, but in the

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defensive. See, for example, DL, LXXIII (1917), 364. Karl Schlerf, editor of the board's monthly publication, also referred to criticism in a letter to Graebner. Sept. 20, 1918, TG 122. But compared to the support the board received, such criticism was minor.

[1] This subject is treated at greater length in Chapters VII and VIII.

end no less dramatically. The result was an unparalleled decade of change in these four facets of denominational life.

CHAPTER IV

MIXED ACCENTS

Although World War I ultimately influenced many aspects of the Missouri Synod, its most important immediate effect remained the change of a language evolution into a language revolution. The ruthless suppression of the German language throughout the country and the persecution of Lutherans in many states was undeniably painful, but it was the most fortunate thing which could have happened to the Missouri Synod at its stage of development. With mass immigration over, the Synod no longer had a need for German in missionary work except on the western Canadian plains. Missouri Lutherans had to shift to Americans at large and, as was pointed out, a German net would catch few English souls.[1] Within the Synod third generation Missouri Lutherans were growing up with only a rudimentary knowledge of German.

Nevertheless, in a normal course of events, the Synod could have continued to refuse the introduction of English. In this choice, of course, the rate of attrition would tend progressively toward a geometric, rather than linear, increase. Children who had to be taught German in order to be confirmed and in order to worship might, at best, compartmentalize their German religion from their American lives. Others would find the church an anachronism as they grew older; those who married a husband or wife who understood no German would also leave the parish.[1] Congregations, then, would maintain their immigrant character by sacrificing their future. Yet, the Synod was large enough and strong enough that it might have postponed reckoning with the future until it was too late.

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[1] K. Kretzschmar, "The Mission of Lutheranism," Western District Pro., 1925, 67.

Of course the language change had started well before World War I. In a sense it began the moment the immigrant disembarked in the New World. Already in 1848 the newly-formed Synod was told, "experience teaches that in spite of all efforts to maintain German in the first place, the children prefer the English language; it seems almost certain that by the second or third generation the German language . . . will be a foreign one."[2]

In 1866 F. A. Schmidt of Decorah, Iowa began publishing the Lutheran Watchman, a fortnightly periodical designed in part to present in English Missouri's position against the American Lutherans. Schmidt, too, noted that the language transition was progressing, "There are now already a number of Lutherans in connection with the Missouri Synod," he wrote, "who find difficulty in reading German, and some who cannot read it at all."[1] The most forthright plea in the Watchman for English work was made by an acute observer in an early issue. "It is an undeniable fact," he noted,

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[1] AL, V (1922), 126.

[2] Siebenter Synodalbericht der Deutschen Evangelisch=Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten (St. Louis, 1853), p. 38.

> that the English language, from year to year, gains more ground among the German and Scandinavian settlers in this country, especially among the residents of those cities and parts of the country which are not within the reach of the current of immigration. Particularly the younger people, residing in cities, who on the one hand are compelled by their diverse vocations to converse chiefly in the English language, and on the other hand do not entertain the same attachment to their mother-tongue as their parents do, generally speak nothing but English. . . . The English language is not only the business-language but also the family-language of many German and Scandinavian immigrants in this country. Almost only in the sphere of religion they have retained their mother-tongue; the days of public worship are almost the only days of the week, when an occasion is offered them to hear and speak the half-forgotten sounds of their native language.

While it might be desirable to continue services in German or the Scandinavian tongues, continued the article, circumstances do not permit. "The contempt of the native American for everything foreign is also of great moment with many, so much so that they are often ashamed of their own language, and in order to become Americanized in every respect, cease to use it altogether." When they do this, the immigrants go to an English language (and usually not conservative Lutheran) church. The same thing happens when an immigrant marries an American. The only solution then is the establishment of English congregations.[1]

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[1] I (1866), 1.

Such pleas notwithstanding, the immediate future of English in the Synod was forecast by the demise of the Lutheran Watchman after only two years of publication. With an overwhelming and continuous influx of new immigrants, the Missouri Synod remained a German body. Until the early 1880's and the break with the Ohio Synod over predestination, all those seeking an English ministry were referred to that synod because it used considerably more English.[2]

Even after the break there was little vigorous action in favor of English. In 1872 a number of English speaking congregations in the state of Missouri, drawing heavily from the conservative Tennessee and Holston Synods, formed a conference in doctrinal agreement with the Missouri Synod. When, partly on the basis of language, they were refused admission to the Synod in 1887, they established what became in 1890 the English Evangelical Synod of Missouri and other States. The Lutheran Witness, founded in 1881 by a former Ohio Synod pastor, became the Synod's organ.[1] Compared to the German synod, however, the group and its activities were extremely limited.

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[1] A. C. [August Crull], I (1866), 68-69.

[2] Baepler, p. 191. See also the theses supporting English work presented at a convention of the Synodical Conference (a supra-synodical body including most of the conservative Lutheran groups) in 1872 by Matthias Loy, a prominent member of the Ohio Synod. Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung der Evangelish=lutherischen Synodal=Conferenz von Nord=Amerika (St. Louis, 1872), pp. 14-20.

Not until 1896 was the German body to have a permanent, official English language journal. In that year, August L. Graebner, Concordia Seminary professor,[2] founded the Theological Quarterly. Like the Lutheran Watchman thirty years before, Graebner agitated on occasion for more English work. In 1901, after surveying the ravages wreaked by the language change among the Swedish Lutheran immigration in the early nineteenth century, Graebner pointed out,

> the change in language is not only impending, but is in actual and even accelerated progress at the present time throughout the German and Scandinavian Lutheran bodies in America. Already English has taken the place of German and Norwegian and Danish and Swedish in families and schools and churches to such an extent that the change can no longer be winked at. As English becomes the language of the hearth, it also becomes the language of the heart, the language of husband and wife, father and mother and child, of infant prattle and dying accents. Where it has come to that, English should also be the language of the best friend of that household, the faithful pastor, in his pastoral visits and personal intercourse with those to whose hearts English has become the familiar way. Let such people learn that the Gospel is just as true and its comforts are just as sweet in English as in any other tongue. Let them also learn that what is sinful and harmful in German or Norwegian is no less sinful and harmful in English and must be shunned and combatted all the same.

He concluded with the warning, "let it be remembered that periods of transition have both their peculiar dangers and their peculiar opportunities, that the latter must be as carefully heeded as the former, and that men will have to render account for neglected opportunities. Let it be understood that it is even better to do late than never what should be done at all, but that late may also be too late."[1] Unlike the Lutheran Watchman, the Quarterly not only survived, but maintained a high level of articles without translations from German, though Graebner was practically its sole contributor until his death in 1904.

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[1] H. P. Eckhardt, The English District (n.p., 1946).

[2] A son of one of the pastors sent by Wilhelm Loehe, and father of Theodore Graebner, later Lutheran Witness editor.

Pastor R. D. Biedermann in 1903 delivered an eloquent plea for more English work in an essay read at the Central District convention of that year. Biedermann explicitly refuted the argument that Lutheranism could not or should not be translated, and warned against both rushing and delaying the transition in language. He returned repeatedly to the point that the Synod had no choice in the matter because its laity was already rapidly changing in language. He recited the story of the dying boy who dutifully said his prayers with his pastor in German, then turned to comfort his mother in English.[2] To further illustrate his point, Biedermann quoted the following account from the daily life of a German immigrant mother and her American-born son.

Wenn besagte Mutter dem Kinde befiehlt, die deutsche

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[1] TQ, V (1901), 237-238.

[2] "Die 'englishe' Frage," Pro., 14-15.

> *Lection fuer den naechsten Tag zu lernen, so sagt sie:* "Take your German book and learn your lesson." *Waehrend das Kind die deutsche Aufgabe lernt, gibt die Mutter, wenn sie dem Kinde bei der Erlernung der Aufgabe behuelflich ist, alle Erklaerungen in englischer Sprache:* "That's no u, that is an n, can't you see? Now spell it right, n u nu." *Ist die Aufgabe gelernt, und das Kind soll zu Bett gehen, so sagt sie:* "Now, Frank, say your prayer!" *und das Kind faengt an zu beten:* "*Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit*."[1]

In 1911 the Synod made its most significant commitment to English when it finally admitted the English Synod congregations to membership. After prolonged negotiations the English group entered the German body and "*deutsche*" was subsequently dropped from the title of the combined organization. The pastors of the English Synod, however, were apparently afraid of being swallowed up by the main body and insisted upon remaining a distinct unit instead of amalgamating geographically with the existing districts. Their English District thus became the only national district, the only one in the Synod without boundaries fixed along state lines. Maintaining its organizational integrity enabled the English District to lobby most effectively on the Synodical level. Until well into the Twenties that district provided a disproportionate amount of the forward-looking leadership for the Synod, both in men and ideas.[2]

However, the segregation of the English congregations had its disadvantages. Jurisdictional disputes were bound to arise when the English District moved actively into a city considered by the state-wide district its own. When the English District had an impact on a local German congregation (usually through a nearby English church drawing members away from a German congregation), the results might be quite unhappy. Tempers would flare on both sides; appeals to the need for one or the other language would lead to intransigence and then to factions. Other clergy, then district officials, would be drawn into the fray.[1] The language question could jam Synodical machinery probably more effectively than any other question. A plain case of heresy was much easier to deal with.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 31.

[2] See, for example, *Ein.*, 1917, 39-41; 1920, 169-170.

Although the language transition had been well started before the war, it was only started. What was probably a pre-war consensus among the overwhelming majority of the Synod was expressed by a parochial school teacher, Louis Zobel, in a Schulblatt article of 1914. Zobel was quite ready to admit the need for English in everyday activities and could visualize the eventual demise of German. But the article was characterized by an inflexibility regarding any concessions on the use of German in religious life. It was not that Zobel argued for the use of German in religious life. He simply never considered the use of English in this sphere. For example, he quoted Prof. George Mezger of the St. Louis seminary: "it will finally come that we cannot hold to the German language as a church language in the long run." "We know that the Gospel is not bound to the German language."[1] But Mezger emphasized the quantity of Lutheran religious literature locked in German. It would be a very long time, he said, before this material was accessible in English. His solution was not to speed the translations, but to delay the transition as long as possible.

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[1] For a case in point, see the G. F. L. List-Graebner-O. C. Kreinheder corr., Nov. and Dec., 1924, TG 61.

Zobel also quoted a bitter complaint against German-Americans, who, "as soon as they are capable of understanding a little English, and what's more, an entirely . . . incorrect English, . . . are not ashamed to use it generally. Here and there are even Germans who are ashamed of their mother tongue."[2] It was essential, he said, to maintain German both at home and in the school.

For Zobel it was absolutely necessary that parents use German rather than English at home with their children. They should not use German between themselves and English with their children. German should also be used in church young people's societies. Though Teacher Zobel emphasized that Lutheran congregations maintained parochial schools for religious rather than linguistic reasons, he was explicit that "through the schools we will hold the German language for our descendents."[3] The reason for this stress on German was primarily that the children would then have a better grasp of religious instruction in church and school, and participate more fully in the worship services. The author never considered the possibility of having the pastor and teacher use English instead of forcing the children to learn German in order to teach them Lutheranism.

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[1] XLIX, 98.

[2] *Ibid.*, 101.

[3] *Ibid.*, 103.

Zobel's article demonstrated how the Synod's German character, previously a strength, had become a liability. The time to move quickly into English had come, but there was little in the Synod's heritage which promised a graceful and speedy acceptance of the inevitable. In 1914 the most informed prediction would have been of a debilitating, embittering struggle which would continue for decades. Or, as one pastor stated it: "By a normal transition, lasting about a generation, we would lose many of our young people and the process would be as painful as to lop a dog's tail half an inch at a time."[1]

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The war did not immediately solve the language question. Indeed, the heavy attack on German seemed only to intensify the problem. An emotional argument for German in the Synod was met by an equally strong prejudice outside of the Synod, backed, moreover, by force. But this was precisely what was needed. Drastic intensification of the linguistic problem helped solve it. The war and the nativism of the early Twenties, by imposing an unappealable decision from without, forced the German faction within the Synod toward the English group, while allowing both to unite in defense of indiscriminate slurs on Lutheran patriotism. Instead of lasting a generation or more, the worst of the language battle was over within a decade after the war.

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[1] J. A. Schlicting to Graebner, Oct. 26, 1918, TG 122.

There were probably many congregations in which were repeated the events reported by a Kansas pastor:

> our congregation voted out all German language services. The attendance at the meeting wasn't very good, the subject came up as a startler to most of them; the majority of the so-called "English" faction (those who derive more benefit from an Engl. sermon) were there, and without a great deal of discussion the motion carried. There had been mob spirit in a town about 12 miles from here on account of alleged disloyal utterances by a Lutheran alien there, the Praeger case was fresh & so the psychological moment was there & the English crowd either with the best interests of the congregation at heart or simply to get their "English" in made use of the temporary scare.[1]

When, later in 1918, violence again occurred near this congregation, "it put a definite stop to all grumblings which had still been heard, about 'hasty action,' 'cowardice,' and 'why not wait until we are told to drop the German.'"[2] Even where such congregational change did not occur, the war, by focusing on the language question, led pastors to reconsider the situation. Wrote one clergyman, "At our last Synod's meeting a brother arose and insisted that proceedings . . . be printed in English. . . . I believed then that he was radical, I believe now that I have done him an injustice."[1]

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[1] Rudolph Graebner to Graebner, May 9, 1918, TG 122. Robert Praeger was an innocent German-American lynched by a drunken mob in Illinois.

[2] Rudolph Graebner to Graebner, Sept. 16, 1918, TG 122.

The war probably accomplished few quick conversions of those passionately attached to the German. But by forcing a brutal confrontation with the language question, the war gave a powerful stimulus to those who were ready to make the change. It provided an excuse, indeed, a demand, to speak out on the language change; it urged those so disposed toward more eloquent advocacy of English. American super-patriotism was employed to some extent as a bludgeon: "War rightly demands a sacrifice of everything except Christian principle," wrote Graebner in the Witness. "And Christian principle is not involved in the language question except in those cases in which the change from German to English--involves hardship? no--where this change would absolutely leave a large proportion of people without the comfort of the Gospel."[2]

No pleas in an official Synodical organ for greater use of English equalled those in the Lutheran Witness beginning in the spring of 1918. Again and again in those months the Witness turned to the language question. Graebner summed up his case best in a judicious October editorial. He was not insensitive to the pathos of the language change among those who had grown accustomed to hearing God's Word and to addressing Him in German. But he nevertheless pleaded with

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[1] Otto Erbe to Graebner, May 29, 1920, TG 61. See also Theo. Andres to Graebner, Sept. 9, 1918; J. A. Schlichting to Graebner, Oct. 26, 1918, TG 122.

[2] XXXVII (1918), 158.

German immigrants not to judge English as a vehicle for religious thought on the basis of their own reactions to a language learned late in life. Action based on such sentiment, he stated, would "lead to stagnation and worse." Graebner had no quarrel with the use of German in the past, but the "matter received a different aspect, 1) wherever the children of the congregation must first learn to speak German in order to receive profit from religious instruction, and 2) since immigration from Germany has ceased and the opportunity for missionary work among English-speaking Americans greatly overshadows the opportunity among the German-speaking element." The editorial concluded with the earnestly balanced, "you cannot demand of old people that they be deprived of the benefits of religion until they have laboriously learned a new language, the English; and you cannot deprive children of the benefits of religious instruction until they have laboriously learned a new language, the German."[1]

For men like Graebner, the war was "a great opportunity," and a "blessing in disguise." "The change in language is to come sometime," he wrote in April 1918. "And when it does come, there is generally a conflict in the congregation which extends over years, to the great spiritual harm of its members. By a sudden change under pressure, the operation is performed so quickly that it is almost painless."[2] Privately,

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[1] LW, XXXVII (1918), 325.

[2] LW, XXXVII (1918), 139. American Lutheran editor Paul Lindemann later used the same "blessing in disguise" phrase

Graebner expressed confidence in the outcome.[1]

A pastor in Iowa went so far as to credit the war with avoiding a language struggle even in the home. "Parents are beginning to realize that their children don't know any German," he wrote. "They begin to see that their children have been obliged to deposit their religion in a safe of which they have never known, or long forgotten, the combination."[2] That parents and others were beginning to realize the children did not know any German was incontestable. But not every leader put the same happy construction on this realization as did the Iowa clergyman. Synodical First Vice-president J. W. Miller declared, "the children should use also in church the language in which their mother sings and prays with them in order that no alienation may enter the family, alienation which often leads to an estrangement between family and church." Lately, Miller complained, "Children of German parents understand so little German that they must learn German as a foreign language."[3]

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in hoping that the accelerated change in language would throw open new vistas in missionary opportunities. AL, I, 8 (1918), 1.

[1] In fact, he welcomed the war: "it is wholesome simply that our people are in difficulty after three generations of trouble-free enjoyment of religious freedom and prosperity. We had begun to ossify. In many congregations that was a pretty well completed process." Graebner to F. Pfotenhauer, 6 July 1918, TG 122.

[2] J. E. R. Schmidt to Graebner, Oct. 13, 1918, TG 122. The same safe-combination analogy was quoted in LW, XXXVII (1918), 349; and in Carl Gieseler, The Wide-Open Island City (CPH, 1927), p. 35.

[3] [Cleveland] Wachter und Anzeiger, May 3, 1918, TG 122.

There were still congregations like the one in Cleveland where an old and respected pastor lost a long, hard fight for the introduction of more English.[1] And there were still laymen like the man who, when informed that the Synod had dropped "*deutsche*" from its title in 1918, retorted, "*Dann sind wir nicht mehr besser als irgend eine* [Masonic] *loge oder ein weltlicher Verein*."[2] Even the war could not completely erase the sentiments behind the phrase, "*Lassen wir die deutsche Sprache fahren, geht unsere lutherische Kirche zurgrunde*."[3] Just before the war, Adolf Pfotenhauer, the president's brother, had summed up this position in a series of lectures for new members in a congregation. Referring to "German" in the formal title of the congregation, he wrote, "We bear the name with every right. The German language is here still the everyday language. For this precious benefit we have to thank our parochial school. The loss of the German language is frequently accompanied by the loss of true Lutheranism. This need not be so, it should not be so, but experience has demonstrated it."[4]

President Pfotenhauer, in a statement on the language question during the summer of 1918, did emphasize that no language could take precedence over another; the church was simply to choose that best understood by its hearers. However, to illustrate the dangers he saw in a language change, Pfotenhauer borrowed an analogy from Luther, and compared God's Word to a liquid being poured from one vessel to another. Care must be taken, he said, that the second vessel was big enough and that nothing was spilled and lost. The president suggested that congregations make no lasting changes until there was time for reflection and discussion.[1] For Pfotenhauer the change to English was inevitable (though probably many years away), but one should not anticipate Providence by hastening the process.[2] He gave the most eloquent and candid statement of his position toward the war and language in a letter to Theodore Graebner. "I cannot share your views about the German," wrote Pfotenhauer. The president thought that no one could be sure that the language would wane quickly after the war. "In any case, before the outbreak of the war, 75% of our church work was in German--because the people understood the Gospel better in this language than in English. This has not been changed by the war. Therefore, I cannot regard it as a trifling affair if the language should suddenly be changed."

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[1] H. M. Zorn to Graebner, May 24, 1918, TG 122.

[2] Quoted in K. F. Lohrmann to Graebner, Oct. 27, 1918, TG 122.

[3] Quoted in Neitzel to Graebner, Oct. 2, 1918, TG 122.

[4] *Fuenfzehn Ansprachen an neuaufgenommene Glieder* (CPH, 1914), p. 7.

Pfotenhauer was convinced that the parochial schools would be quickly lost if German instruction was eliminated.

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[1] DL, LXXIV (1918), 237-238.

[2] Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 11 June 1918, TG 122.

"If German is dropped from the school, the farmer will reconsider sending his children 2-6 miles through snow and ice. The public school stands next door. The teacher is an innocent young miss. Why not send the children there? The pastor can provide for religion. In the city one will let go of the school for economy's sake."

"In short," Pfotenhauer summed up,

> I cannot see that the situation has been suddenly changed in our Synod by the war. And if before the war one would have seen it as a calamity if everything had been turned upside down, then it is also a calamity if such happens now. Therefore, it follows that we should not favor the calamity, but only yield where it must be and plead with God that He soon sends peace, that we can build further and solve the language question evangelically. In my heart there arises a nameless lament when I have to pass in review before my soul all of our congregations and I examine them as to what kind of spiritual nourishment they will receive should their language be suddenly taken away, and I am sorry that the Witness has made a kind of patriotic issue of the language question.[1]

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In Pfotenhauer's statement were the two concerns most often reiterated by the more articulate of the old guard.[2] As he made quite obvious, Pfotenhauer feared that the elimination of German from the schools would ruin the Missourian school system. Second, he saw that the move into English denied Missouri Synod Lutherans the great heritage of German religious literature, and simultaneously exposed them to all manner of American heterodoxy. These fears were not to be dismissed lightly, for there was enough truth in each of them to threaten the Synod's future. Each became the focus of controversy; each had to be overcome by the critics.

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[1] 14 June 1918, TG 122. Graebner replied with some justice that the Witness had printed "five or six times as much in favor of German as the Lutheraner in the past months." 6 July 1918, TG 122.

[2] The liberal-conservative split common to some other American denominations during this period was not present in the Missouri Synod; theologically there was an impressive homogeneity. There were, however, important differences on many practical questions. Grouping was admittedly not rigid, but, as will be shown throughout this study, personnel was consistent enough to make an old guard-critics polarization useful.

It would have been difficult to disprove a connection between the Missouri Synod's strength and growth rate, and its extensive system of elementary schools, a system which dwarfed that of any other Lutheran body. As Pfotenhauer frankly acknowledged, the German language had been a prime attraction of the parochial school.[1] Who could say what fate a school without this attraction might suffer? The president might, in fact, have used the English District's schools to illustrate in what state the Synod would be after the language change.[2] That district was notoriously weak in establishment and support of parochial schools. In 1918, for instance, only about 8% of the English District congregations had schools, while for the Synod as a whole the figure was over 77%.[3] As legitimate as the fear of losing the schools may have been, however, it provided a convenient rationalization for continuing the German as a language of instruction.[1]

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[1] Also acknowledged by Fuerbringer in DL, LXXVII (1921), 22.

[2] A comparison made by others. See the English District's reply to attacks from the Central District convention of 1915. English District Pro., 1916, 73. See also J. H. C. Fritz's allusions to such a view of the English District, LW, XXXVI (1917), 288.

[3] Calculated from SYB, 1918, 93.

Those who recognized the status quo as untenable thus had an enormous educative task to perform. They had to convince the old guard that the language transition need not be disastrous, and, to make sure that it was not, they had to convince the laity of the religious rather than linguistic function of parochial education. Even before anti-German incidents had begun late in 1917, Theodore Graebner had started the first phase of the educative task by a series of articles in the Lutheraner--thus primarily for the old guard. Many Missouri Lutherans, repeated Graebner, did not realize that the school was not primarily for language; he acknowledged the common fear that the parochial school would be relinquished when the German was. However, wrote Graebner, there were congregations which had successfully made the transition to English.[2] To prove this statement, succeeding issues of the Lutheraner carried reports from pastors whose schools were now English. J. H. C. Fritz, pastor of Bethlehem church in St. Louis, and one of the most articulate critics, had the first report. As others would repeat, he emphasized the unfamiliarity of the younger generation with German. To continue instruction in that language, he insisted, would vitiate the true purpose of the school.[1]

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[1] Said the Rundschau in 1917, "moreover the parochial schools are the custodians of German custom and manners, and transmit . . . the jewel of our great mother tongue, which must be loved and held dear by every true German-American, and must be held for his descendants even here in the far west of this land." March 21, 7:2. See also DL, LXXV (1919), 120; LuW, LXII (1916), 83.

[2] DL, LXXIII (1917), 165.

War measures on the home front during early 1918, however, made academic further discussion of the possible effects of language change on the parochial schools. The fact was, as Graebner pointed out to Pfotenhauer, that German had to yield to circumstances beyond the control of the Synod.[2] It was not a question of losing schools if one moved into English, but of losing them if one remained German. In such circumstances, the *Witness* consistently urged a separation of the various aspects of the language question. Graebner argued for a distinction between the use of German as a medium of instruction in the schools and the use of German as a language of worship. German should be used in the church as long (and only as long) as members of the congregations could not profit from English services; but, the *Witness* insisted again and again, barring highly unusual circumstances, in the school German should be dropped.[3]

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[1] *DL*, LXXIII (1917), 181.

[2] 6 July 1918, TG 122.

[3] XXXVII (1918), 169, 282, 311. See also Graebner to Pfotenhauer, 11 June 1918, TG 122.

In order to close all loopholes, the *Witness* editor even wrote National Commissioner of Education P. P. Claxton in Washington, D. C. to make sure Claxton had not included teaching German in elementary schools when he supported college German language instruction in a public letter. Claxton's

The American Lutheran, too, was adamant: "We see no reason why the growing generation should not receive its religious training in the language of the country, the language it best understands, and the language in which it will, in the future, be compelled to justify and defend its faith." The church, wrote editor Lindemann, "has no right to foist upon the growing generation a vehicle of religious worship which is bound to prove a severe handicap."[1]

Private expressions were much less restrained. "Fancy Peter and Paul instructing their Jewish converts by all means to teach their children the language of the Synagogue," fumed Graebner to a friend. "Of course we have Walther and Luther in German. But Paul had Isaiah, Moses, David! Yet every NT test is written in a foreign tongue--the Greek."[2] Even children who ostensibly spoke some German were at a loss when it came to religious education, one North Dakota pastor pointed out. The terminology employed in confirmation class was not part of the child's street German vocabulary.[3]

The situation in the years immediately after the war must have been truly alarming. Not infrequently, Missouri

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reply confirming Graebner's assumption was then noted in the Witness. XXXVII (1918), 331.

[1] I, 10 (1918), 2. See also AL, IV (1921), 85, and WLM, XXXV (1927), 704, 738.

[2] Graebner to W. G. Polack, May 28, 1920, TG 61.

[3] R. G. Messerli to Graebner, Oct. 21, 1918, TG 122.

Synod children had to learn German before they could receive religious instruction for confirmation.[1] As late as 1923, when the first such statistics were taken, 17% of the religious instruction in Missouri Synod schools was being given exclusively in German; another 38% was in a mixture of German and English. As F. J. Lankenau pointed out, the result of instruction in German was the admission of children to communicant membership with a far lower degree of Christian knowledge "than those who were confirmed twenty-five years ago by the same pastor in the same congregation after the same number of lessons, given with the same faithfulness and prayerfulness."[2] Fortunately, the hard core use of German diminished fairly rapidly as shown in Figure 1. By the Depression, although some German was still used in a third of parochial school religious instruction, it was used exclusively in only 3%.

Once the war made it much less necessary to dissuade the old guard from the use of German in the schools, the second and main phase of the critics' educative program became all the more prominent. This phase was to convince the doubters of the necessity for parochial schools in English. It was concentrated in the _Witness_, and thus aimed especially at English-speaking parents and clergy. From 1918 through the early Twenties, the _Witness_ printed a disproportionate number of articles on the efficacy and benefits of the Lutheran elementary school.

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[1] _DL_, LXXIX (1923), 18.

[2] _The World Is Our Field_, p. 213.

FIGURE 1

LANGUAGE USED IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS[1]

Year	All English	Both	All German
1923	45%	38%	17%
1926	58	35	7
1927	60	34	4
1928	64	31	4
1929	67	29	3

It is impossible, of course, to prove that the campaign in the Witness, and to a much lesser extent in the Walther League Messenger and the Lutheraner, had any direct effect on the school situation. Missouri Synod schools did suffer during the war years and few new schools were begun during the Twenties, but the gloomiest prognostications of the old guard were not fulfilled. The Synod retained a strong base and an equally strong tradition from which to expand after the Depression and World War II.

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President Pfotenhauer's concern that an English Missouri Synod would suffer because most of the Lutheran classics were in German was shared even by those who favored the most rapid Americanization.[1] The fear was expressed that without its own literature in English, the Synod would soon fall under the influence of Reformed thinking and practice.[2] The Synod had long maintained its own publishing plant, Concordia Publishing House, and CPH had printed much theological literature over the years, but most of this was in German.

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[1] From pertinent editions of SYB. No figures available before 1923, nor for 1924 and 1925.

For immediate assistance to Missouri Synod clergy suddenly forced to preach much more often in English, late in 1918 Graebner produced a paper-bound homiletics manual. He styled his approach inductive, and reprinted long passages, even whole sermons, with his own annotations. In his illustrations Graebner virtually ignored the sermons of

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[1] AL, I, 11 (1918), 4; LW, XL (1921), 212.

[2] Graebner, writing in HM, XLII (1918), 477; Graebner to Edmund Seuel, Mar. 29, 1919; A. W. Kraft to Graebner, Mar. 14, 1919, TG 134.

Reformed thinking could infiltrate even English terminology. Observers found Lutherans using "meeting" when they meant services in church, and "exercise" when they meant a Sunday school service. F. R. Webber, "A Few Problems of the Transition Period" (unpublished MS intended for the Theological Monthly, n.d. [mid-Twenties]), p. 8, William F. Arndt Papers, B 12.

Considering the problems Lutherans occasionally had in translating from the German, it is hardly surprising that they were ready to adopt a commonly used English term. In some perplexity Graebner once addressed himself to translations of church names: "Some names are bound to make trouble. There is Friedensgemeinde, which sounds very well in German, but cannot be made to sound English. Peace Church is not idiomatic. Church of the Divine Peace would be good English, but would sound strange to those accustomed to Friedenskirche. Cross Church sounds as strange to American ears. Some modifying adjective or phrase is demanded--Holy Cross Church, Congregation of the Holy Cross." LW, XLIV (1925), 25.

Luther or Walther. The emphasis was on English homiletics and no attempt was made to translate sermons from the German heritage. Instead Graebner turned chiefly to the great nineteenth century English preachers. Perhaps in a deliberate attempt to impress his German-American readers with the richness of the English oratorical tradition, Graebner quoted Newman Hall, Charles Spurgeon, and Henry Ward Beecher, and alluded to Robert Hall and Jeremy Taylor as if these men were all well known in the Missouri Synod.[1] Only at the end of the work is it clear that this was a manual for an immigrant church in the throes of linguistic change. Graebner there included sections on common English errors, and on Germanisms of phrase and construction, along with a glossary giving English translations and synonyms for German nouns most commonly used in theological language.[2]

A longer term project was initiated in July, 1918 when Pfotenhauer appointed a committee on English literature to aid CPH by soliciting and passing on English manuscripts.[3] By early August, the board was hard at work,

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[1] A good introduction to the English preachers is Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England from Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900 (Princeton, 1962).

[2] Inductive Homiletics, 4 Parts in 3 vols (CPH, 1918-1919).

[3] Edmund Seuel in a circular letter, July 26, 1918, TG 134. Earliest reference extant proposing such a committee is by Graebner in a letter to Pfotenhauer, 6 July 1918, TG 122.

By no means all of the English works published by CPH were to be credited to the English Literature Board. An meeting fortnightly at first. The board wisely decided not to embark on a wholesale translation program, but to secure original works, or, in the case of a few outstanding classics in German, paraphrases rather than translations.[1] It concentrated its efforts on practical helps for the clergy and on reference and instructional books for the laity. By June, 1919, the board could report that J. H. C. Fritz's Practical Missionary, and F. W. C. Jesse's Catechetical Preparations for the Decalog were on the market. The second volume of Friedrich Bente's history of American Lutheranism and a volume of vesper sermons were in production. In prospect were an extensive popular commentary, a pastoral theology and another book on church history. Further catechetical helps and a Lutheran cyclopedia were projected.[2] The board had also recommended that the Theological Quarterly be considerably expanded. In 1920, with the approval of the Synod's Board of Directors, Lehre und Wehre and the Magazin fuer Homiletik were reduced in size, and the Theological Quarterly was changed to a monthly.[3] But as the English Literature

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English Liturgy and Agenda (1917), a triglott edition of the Book of Concord (1921), and a bilingual edition of the Bible were three important projects at least planned before the war. Yet the board radically quickened the production of books in English.

[1] Graebner to W. G. Polack, Mar. 22, 1919, TG 134.

[2] Lit. Bd. Min., June 9, 1919, TG 134.

[3] Lit. Bd. of Min., Feb. 19, 1919, TG 134. BdD Min., 200924B.

Board, and its successor, the Synodical Literature Board,[1] found, the making of books is a slow process. Perhaps also the initial enthusiasm was hard to maintain after the wartime persecution was past. The cyclopedia was not to appear until 1927, the popular commentary was to run to four volumes, and the pastoral theology, after a change in authorship, finally was published in 1932. An English translation of Luther's most important works was proposed in 1926, but various outlines and considerations remained only tentative through the rest of the decade.[2]

Once past 1918, however, there was no doubt that English literature would be forthcoming. Even the American Lutheran, voice for those who wanted more English, expressed itself satisfied with the volume of publications.[3] From 1918 on, the board concentrated on English books. When a German manuscript was passed, it was usually with the comment that such a book would be helpful to pastors who used German now only irregularly.[4]

That the language question was not more prominent should be credited partly to Edmund E. Seuel, tough-minded and capable business manager of Concordia Publishing House from 1907. Seuel's stern ways with authors in the Missouri Synod gave rise to dozens of legends about his close eye to profits. Since he was also Synodical treasurer beginning in 1914, he undeniably wielded a great deal of power in the Synod.

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[1] The Synodical Literature Board was established at the 1920 triennial convention. Pro., 1920, 47.

[2] Lit. Bd. Min., Feb. 18, 1926, April 10, 1928; LW, XLVII (1928), 97, 321; WLM, XXXVI (1928), 476; Pro., 1929, 136.

[3] II, 5 (1919), 12; II, 10 (1919), 2.

[4] Lit. Bd. Min., May 20, 1926, June 9, 1927.

American-born, Seuel graduated from the St. Louis seminary in 1886. After serving for two years as a Reiseprediger in Nebraska, he returned to St. Louis to teach at Walther College, a Lutheran high school, until he became manager of the publishing house in 1907.[1] Seuel combined a personal readiness to move into English with an exceptionally shrewd business sense; the combination made unmistakable the direction CPH would take.[2] Already before the war, 40% of the titles published were in English; by the end of the decade, this percentage had risen to ninety.[3]

Of course, a successful publishing firm reflects the wishes of its constituency, but to a certain extent a publisher may lead and direct his customers. And this was what CPH under Seuel did. Concordia Publishing House not only kept pace with the language change, but actively cooperated with the most Americanized wing of the Synod. In 1927 CPH placed a full page advertisement in the Lutheraner that was as strong as any editorial which had appeared in that periodical. The publishing house called for more Lutheran missions among native Americans, and recommended an active campaign to publicize the Synod--with CPH English books and periodicals, of course.[1] With Lutheran books in English more readily available, the language transition was made that much easier both for the older pastor and for the young man just beginning his ministry. Had there been resistance or even only indifference on the part of the publishing house to providing books in English, the process of acculturation in the Missouri Synod might have been quite different.

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[1] Almost none of his papers are extant; there remains only a formidable oral tradition about the man. For a brief sketch, see LC, p. 971.

[2] Just why Seuel was ready to use English is not clear. But soon after he took over at CPH he took the lead in providing English Sunday school material in the Synod. Martin A. Haendschke, The Sunday School Story, 20th Year-book, Lutheran Education Association (River Forest, Ill., 1963), p. 35. For Seuel's opposition to the old guard, see Lit. Bd. Min., Oct. 23, 1924.

[3] See Figure 4, p. 148.

The extensive literature of Lutheranism in German was the reason for some of the old guard's hesitancy about the change in language. Yet this German literature had a more complex effect than merely leading to old guard opposition to English. No good Lutheran could deny the value, even necessity, of studying Luther and other Lutheran theologians; very few in the Synod, though, were ready in the Twenties to translate the whole of this extensive corpus. Therefore, even the thoroughly Americanized clergy had to admit the necessity of a knowledge of German--even if only a reading knowledge. The German theological classics may thus have been a cohesive force for the Missouri Synod: the clergy might differ on the pastoral use of it, but all had to know at least some German.

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[1] DL, LXXXIII (1927), 48.

Although Pfotenhauer did not say so explicitly, he undoubtedly included the German chorale heritage when he spoke of Lutheran literature in German. There was apparently good reason to fear that the chorales would drop from common congregational usage. "Many of our people believe when the German language is laid aside and the English language adopted," wrote F. R. Webber, "that it is necessary to sing hymns of the same sort as the neighboring Baptists and Methodists use."[1]

It was to be expected that as the Synod became more American, it would appropriate the best works from English hymnody alongside the German chorales. The difficulty was that English hymns were not only appropriated but substituted for chorales, and inferior hymns were adopted. Repeatedly, Synodical writers had to warn against revival hymns "of the Moody-Sankey type."[2] Walter Wismar, when he lectured to young people's societies, asked the audience to write down their favorite hymns. Compiling these, he found that in the ten most popular hymns there was only one translated German chorale. In the twenty most popular, there were only five chorales.[1] When one of the Synodical colleges polled the English District pastors for a list of hymns ministerial students should memorize, the result was a list of twenty. Only two were originally German.[2]

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[1] "A Few Problems of the Transition Period," p. 3. The good humor of the German-speaking members in congregations which held services in both languages every morning was probably not improved by the fact that the choir usually sang only in the English service. According to Fuerbringer, the young people who ordinarily made up the choir preferred the English service, could not sing German well, and/or taught in the Sunday school during the German service. DL, LXXXIV (1928), 58.

[2] Webber, p. 3; LW, XLIII (1924), 62; DL, LXXXI (1925), 234-55.

Continued propaganda for better church music,[3] improved translations,[4] and the rising taste of the Synod's constituency slowly corrected this situation. In 1929 a major revision of the English hymn book was authorized. By that time, too, interest in liturgics and the music of Bach had become marked.[5] By the end of the decade, it was reasonably certain that the Synod had avoided the hazards posed by the early dearth of orthodox Lutheran literature in English.

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Providing English religious literature to replace that previously enjoyed in German was relatively mechanical and straight forward. Much more difficult to replace was the insulation afforded by the use of the German language in America. In former days, the German Lutheran pastor rested secure in the knowledge that his flock was safe from all but the wolves who appeared in German clothing. Now that his congregation was fast adopting English even in its church life, members were exposed to the religious indifference and sectarian heresies rampant in America. The laity was still guarded, of course, by the formidable moats and walls of Lutheran confessionalism and Missouri Synod conservatism.[1] However neither confessionalism nor doctrinal conservatism was quite the ready-made wall as was language. The barrier of German was one erected and maintained by the immigrant himself; that of theology had to be built and continually kept in repair by the pastor.

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[1] *LW*, XLIV (1925), 280.

[2] *LW*, XLI (1922), 75.

[3] See the regular series throughout the 1926 *Witness* by W. G. Polack, "The Church Year in Song."

[4] For a complaint about pre-war translations, see *DL*, LXXXI (1925), 235.

[5] For a more extended discussion of liturgics and Bach, see Chapter VI.

Thus a pastor who weathered the language controversy could not afford a sigh of relief. Though he did not now suddenly face wholesale apostacy, he still had to reckon with his young people who, if they disagreed with congregational or pastoral actions, could leave the congregation but remain Lutheran by joining a parish formerly Swedish or Norwegian, but now also English.[2] Or, without the ties of language to hold them to Lutheranism, they might leave the Lutheran camp entirely.

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[1] Barriers which in the end proved forbidding enough to keep the Synod more or less isolated until the Sixties.

[2] DL, LXXXI (1925), 285.

As was pointed out in the American Lutheran, the change in language meant an end to multiple parishes. When serving a German-speaking constituency, pastors were known to handle half a dozen or more scattered preaching places. Immigrants preferred a service every few weeks in their own language to one every Sunday in a foreign tongue. Hence they stayed loyal to their pastor even if he was based many miles away. When he had to meet non-Lutheran competition in English, however, the pastor no longer dared spread himself so thin.[1] Instead of ending with the language change, the pastor's troubles had only begun.

Even the English District recognized the hazards of the greater use of English. The president of that district called upon his constituency to remain true to the fathers, "exposed as we are to the dangers of indifference in matters of doctrine and practice which threaten us even in a greater degree than our more isolated sister churches which still employ the language of the fathers."[2] It was nice coincidence that at the first Southern District convention to be opened with an English service, the English essay read during the sessions was entitled "Religious Indifference."[3]

The isolation produced by the use of German had not necessarily been unwelcome to the leaders of the Missouri

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[1] AL, II, 7 (1919), 7.

[2] O. C. Kreinheder, "President's Address and Report," English District Pro., 1922, 10.

[3] LW, XXXIV (1915), 247.

Synod. This isolation was at the same time insulation. Missouri Synod Lutherans were protected by their language from an environment rejected by the immigrant as alien and by the Lutheran as secular or sectarian. The use of German increased the already existing homogeneity of the German-American Lutheran community--and also increased the social pressure assisting the pastor in keeping all of his flock within the fold. Furthermore, in attacking some manifestation of the Devil, the clergy could in some cases identify it not only as evil, but non-German as well, and thus doubly deplorable. As long as his parishioners used mostly German, it was easier for the Lutheran pastor to assume that much of the evil around them could not penetrate the linguistic barrier. But once they adopted English in their daily lives, the people had to be warned against a host of evils and dangers to which they were now susceptible.

Thus the language change, along with the naivete and lack of sophistication in the Missouri Synod during the Twenties, may help explain the extraordinary amount of polemic and proscription of that era. The press, novels, secular poetry--all reading matter not specifically approved by Synodical authorities--was suspect. Drama and the movies merited nearly blanket disapproval. Dancing and jazz music were other snares of the Devil. Birth control and twentieth century extravagance were harbingers of complete moral collapse. The city harbored all these temptations, as well as the dark secrets of the white slave traffic. Universities were infected with evolutionary theories negating God's Word as well as God Himself. One denomination after another had capitulated to the spiritual bankruptcy of liberal theology or had ruined the Protestant image as well as blurred the distinction between church and state by Calvinistic attempts to make society over through political activity. Those who strove to maintain the Truth for themselves and their children were beset on the one hand by the Catholic menace and on the other by the Ku Klux Klan and the Masonic orders.

The classic jeremiad was the essay read at the Northern Illinois District convention in 1925. The paper lashed out at "Modernism, liberal theology, unionism, lodgism, non-attendance at church, lack of Christian education of the children, of love and zeal for the kingdom of God, family altar, mammon worship, the dance, the theater, birth control, entertainments, gambling devices; increasing opposition against the holy Christian church, also against the preaching of God's Word."[1]

Significantly, the polemic and proscription were found much more in English than in German, in the Lutheran Witness than in the Lutheraner. When the Missouri Synod Lutheran used English in his religious life, denominational identity and affiliation were no longer so concrete as for his father. His Lutheraner-reading father had known who he was denominationally: he was German Lutheran--not Swedish

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[1] LW, XLIV (1925), 341.

Lutheran or American Lutheran, and certainly not Congregational or Presbyterian.[1] The Witness constituency, on the whole, had neither the sense of immigrant alienation, nor the crutch of a foreign language. The Witness therefore tried to regain the denominational identity lost with the German by substituting new boundaries for the former boundaries of language, by replacing linguistic barriers with those of explicit proscription.

The Witness attempted to reinforce Lutheran consciousness in those who no longer used German by informing Missouri Synod Lutherans in English what they believed and what they were not to believe, what they were and were not to accept in the contemporary American scene to which they were now exposed.[2] In effect, the Lutheran Witness was telling the young Missouri Synod Lutheran who he was--and who he was not. When Graebner was criticized by a Missouri Synod pastor for attacking other church bodies with "caustic sarcasm and bitter ridicule," he did not deny that the Witness had sometimes hit below the belt (his own phrase), but he replied that such attacks were necessary to keep the people aware of the difference between the Missouri Synod and other bodies and to show the laity that issues were still alive.[1]

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[1] How much the Lutheraner was slanted toward the aging German-speaking generation is demonstrated by the occasional nostalgia especially in the articles of the late Twenties on subscribers who had been reading the paper for half a century or more. In 1929, Fuerbringer printed a letter from a man who had been reading the Lutheraner since 1865. LXXXV, 121.

[2] Significantly, some of the first books put out for the laity by the English Literature Board were a Lutheran cyclopedia, and a Bible commentary: to give Missouri Synod Lutherans their church's view in English both of the world and of the Bible.

In this proscriptive campaign the Witness was not unique in Missouri Synod history. Particularly during the mid-nineteenth century, an enormous amount of polemic was printed in the Lutheraner against the American churches and sects. In the nineteenth century newly arrived German immigrants, unfamiliar with a free church tradition, had to be properly oriented.[2] In the 1920's much the same process had to be repeated all over again as Missouri Synod Lutherans were generally exposed to the same sects in English.

In other words, the Lutheran Witness effectively translated into the English the siege mentality so marked in previous Missouri Synod history, as also in the history of other immigrant groups. The Missouri Synod was truly to have all of "the fathers' faith in the children's language." The siege theme was explicit, for instance, when, in writing a lead article on Missouri Synod history, Witness editor

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[1] John Schliepsiek to Graebner, Sept. 13, 1926; Graebner to Schliepsiek, Sept. 17, 1926, TG 81.

For means other than polemic which were used to develop Lutheran self-consciousness in this era, see Chapter VI.

[2] Though immigrants continued to arrive in large numbers until the last years of the century, the polemical articles in the Lutheraner fell off somewhat after the 1870's. This was probably due in part to the first edition in 1872 of Martin Guenther's Populaere Symbolik (CPH), essentially a Lutheran guidebook through the wilderness of American "sects." I am indebted to Mr. James Albers for his appraisal of nineteenth century polemic.

Graebner chose a text from Nehemiah and the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Exile: "They which builded on the wall and they that bore burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other hand held a weapon." The picture applied equally well, said Graebner, to the whole course of Missouri Synod history. "So it was in the early years [of the Synod], so it was through the decades that followed, so it is today. Then, the raids of fanatical sects, penetrating the very wilderness, encompassing heaven and earth to make proselytes, a revivalism gone mad ravaging the churches of the land; to-day, the hosts of evil that march under the banners of New Theology, Higher Criticism, and Evolutionism, of Indifferentism and Unionism, assailing the Christian Church both from within and from without." The editor referred to the Synodical organs, the Lutheran Witness among them, and compared them to "a Book of Chronicles of the war of a sound Lutheranism against the enemies that sought to encompass the ruin of our Western Zion."[1]

A further reason for the difference between the Witness and Lutheraner was the difference between the personalities of respective editors Graebner and Fuerbringer. In many ways the two men were a study in contrasts.[2] Though both men were born in the United States, their experiences, and to some extent, orientation, were quite different. Fuerbringer was born in 1864, a son of one of the clergymen in the original Stephanite Saxon immigration, and a nephew of C. F. W. Walther. After graduating from the seminary in 1885, Fuerbringer served the congregation in Frankenmuth, Michigan, a strong, exclusively German colony since its founding. In 1893 the young Fuerbringer was called to a professorship in St. Louis, where he remained the rest of his life. At home, throughout his education, and in the parish he served, German was used exclusively, and his work continued mostly in that language.[1] Fuerbringer held the editorship of the Lutheraner between 1896 and 1912, and again, most important, after 1917.

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[1] XLI (1922), 129.

[2] The contrasts included even appearance. Fuerbringer was tall and somewhat lanky, distinguished by a carefully-trimmed beard--originally cultivated to hide his youth from his first parishioners. Graebner was short, heavier, dark, and clean-shaven.

Graebner, born in 1875, was twelve years younger than Fuerbringer; his grandfather had led a group of German colonists to Michigan in 1847. After seminary training, he taught in several Lutheran institutions before becoming in 1908 the pastor of a large Chicago congregation in which English was fast becoming the everyday language. Between 1909 and 1913 he edited the Lutheran Herald, an English publication of the Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1913 he came to the seminary as editor and professor. At home, in the parish he served, and in his work, Graebner was pushed toward English.

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[1] As late as 1944, when writing his reminiscences, Fuerbringer expressed a wish to write them in German. Eighty Eventful Years, p. vii.

The two editors were also contrasted in personality and characteristic expression. Graebner was the crusader, concerned with the future of the Synod and with accomplishing a transition and reforms he felt long overdue. Fuerbringer was a milder personality, with perhaps somewhat more attachment to the past. A real concern with people and a special sympathy for those to whom a German service was most meaningful expressed themselves in his quiet, conciliatory, pastoral columns.

But both men were ideally suited to the needs of the positions they filled. Because of the weight of inertia and tradition in the Synod, the English readers needed an outspoken advocate in order to feel that the Synod was moving their way. At the same time the German readers still needed at least cautions expressed from their side so that they would not feel that the Synod was deserting them completely. Had the Lutheraner editor been aggressive and outspoken in his attachment to German, and the Witness editor discreet in his urging of English, the situation would have been much less healthy.

The crisis in identity and difference in editors were two factors accounting for the wide divergence in style (used in its broadest sense) between the Witness and the Lutheraner. A third factor was the simple matter of salesmanship. The best way to assure a successful transition from German to English church periodicals was to provide lively copy in English. Without the Lutheraner's tradition of reader loyalty--a loyalty built on both religious and linguistic bases--and with far more competition in English than the Lutheraner had in German, the Witness had to use more aggressive journalism in order to prosper.[1]

It was with an eye to circulation figures that Graebner led Synodical English-language periodicals into an era of ecclesiastical muckraking; few techniques of journalism arouse interest as much as expose and denunciation, not of sin in general, but of specific current manifestations of the Devil. Graebner criticized a sermon in 1919 as "orthodox, but impotent" because it dealt with only abstractions. "You may warn against 'worldly amusements' with all possible earnestness, and unless you make out a bill of particulars, your indictment will not make any definite impression. But mention 'the dance,' 'the theater,' and you will be comprehended." He continued, "do not fear to offend by too great directness. The mealy-mouthed, milk-and-water style of treating burning questions of morals and beliefs never convinces."[1]

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[1] In 1925, seventy-eight periodicals were published within Synodical circles in North America. Of these, fifty-one, or nearly two-thirds, were begun after 1914; only eight of these "new" papers were in German--and five of these eight had English equivalents. Twenty-seven of the fifty-one were entirely English. Sixteen were basically English, but included some German. (Calculated from a list in SYB, 1925, 172-174.) Small wonder that Witness editor Graebner longed "for the time of 1876, when Der Lutheraner's advent was a bimonthly event of importance in our families!" (LW, XLV [1926], 3.) Small wonder, too, that during this period, both the Lutheraner and the Witness began using many photographs in their pages. Prior to the war there was little such relief in the solid columns of print marching in the Lutheran cause. (See LW, XL [1921], 409.)

Finally, Synodical organs in English, if they strove for general acceptance and a wide audience, had to prove their orthodoxy. The very fact that they were in English made them objects of suspicion. "More articles on the school question should appear in the 'Witness,'" wrote a friendly reader. "The impression has prevailed locally that the editors of the 'Witness' were in accord with the 'English'practice of 'no day schools.'"[2] Editorial stands like that of the Witness during the war hardly helped its reputation among the old guard. The editors of the Witness often seemed anxious to demonstrate their loyalty to the Synod by outshouting everyone else.[3]

Though it does not explain everything, the difference in language and the ongoing transition from German to English provides one of the most useful keys for understanding Synodical press between the War and the Depression. The difference in language dictated constituency; constituency, with the transition of language, influenced function, and function set style.

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[1] HM, XLIII (1919), 476-477.

[2] C. M. Zorn to Graebner, June 26, 1919, TG 78.

[3] Whatever their anxieties, however, the Witness editors succeeded by 1926 in establishing a claim to by far the largest circulation of any English Lutheran church paper in America, LW, XLV (1926), 385.

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Linguistically-motivated support for the parochial schools, the dearth of Lutheran literature in English, and the insulation provided by the use of German were commonly expressed reasons for resistance to the post-war language change. A rarely mentioned factor in official opposition to English was the lack of fluency in English of many Synodical officials. Wrote Otto Erbe, an Iowa pastor, in 1920:

> Did it ever occur to you that a large majority of the Presidents of the Districts are unable and unwilling to do English work in their parish? Recent conditions made it imperative that they at least try. That required much work, extra work and usually the result was that their audiences dwindled down to only a few hearers. Much relieved they now say: My people do not come to English services, we have tried it. I agree with them, but the reason is that our young people and many old too, recognize Sauerkraut English very readily and prefer hearing good German to their palaver.

Pastor Erbe told of a neighboring clergyman who gave such an excuse. The man had recently died, and after hearing good English from the temporary substitute, the congregation made English a prerequisite in its search for a new man. "I knew that these conditions prevailed in our cities," concluded Erbe, "and am now satisfied that the same conditions are to be found in our worthy Praeses Wolfram's congregation [president of the Iowa District] and in most of the congregations of his fellow-presidents, but, ye gods, they do not see it."[1]

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[1] To Graebner, May 29, 1920, TG 61. See also F. E. Traub to Graebner, June 15, 1918, TG 122.

The disparities of fluency in English and German among the Synod's pastors accounted for one of the least heralded effects of the language change: its impact on the careers of church leaders, actual and potential.[1]

As late as 1929, when recommending a young pastor for a call, a district president thought it necessary to include the fact that the man's wife was "an American who cannot speak German, though she is a Lutheran."[2] At the election of a new seminary professor in 1924, Graebner expressed a strong preference for a native American ("to understand American born students"), but he also felt that politics demanded an individual whose training had not been mainly in English.[3] Likewise, in recommending Lutheraner editor Ludwig Fuerbringer for editor-in-chief of the Concordia Cyclopedia Graebner noted that "his collaboration, when announced, would be eminently satisfactory to the older members of the clergy. As these men are to a great extent the element in official positions and of local prominence, their good will must be secured."[4]

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[1] Direct evidence of the effect language had on careers is not exactly overwhelming. The bulk of personal papers of the Twenties have been destroyed and information of this sort was likely never to be put on paper in the first place. Yet what direct evidence remains is too strongly corroborated by common sense and circumstantial evidence to be ignored.

[2] C. M. Beyer to R. Kretzschmar, Nov. 21, 1929, Walter A. Maier Papers.

[3] Graebner to R. Kretzschmar, July 26, 1924, TG 64.

[4] Graebner to English Literature Board, Jan. 11, 1920, TG 134.

The fact that the Synod was moving into English thus did not mean that all those with strong German background were suddenly turned out of office. Indeed, Frederick Pfotenhauer was to remain the president of the Synod until 1935. Yet, midway through the Twenties, the chairman of the board handling pension funds noted that the number of retired ministers had increased partly because the need for bilingual fluency had ended the careers of some older men.[1] As opportunities arose, men in the Synodical as well as the district hierarchy who were too inflexible on the language question were replaced. It was hardly coincidental that all of the men elected vice-presidents after 1917 were known to favor the move into English.[2]

In 1917 approximately 43% of the presidents and vice-presidents of the American districts used no English in their services or held only one English service a month.

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[1] LW, XLIV (1925), 345.

[2] F. Brand's views are clear from his World War I activities; F. J. Lankenau's from his book, The World Is Our Field (CPH, 1928); and J. W. Behnken's from his book Noonday Sermons (CPH, 1925). H. P. Eckhardt and Wm. Dallmann were from the English District. For G. A. Bernthal and F. Randt the case is less clear; they probably represented more of the old guard position than the other vice-presidents, but at least, according to the SYB, at the time of their elections, both had congregations in which as much English as German was used and which supported Sunday schools. In the decade before his election, Randt served as superintendent of missions for the Minnesota District (LW, XLVIII [1929], 249). In this capacity he almost certainly had a hand in the forward-looking proposal to improve Synodical mission administration which was sponsored by the Minnesota District. (See Chapter V)

Mostly by a process of attrition, by 1930 only five percent of the incumbents held only one English service or none at all.[1] About nine percent of these district officials were forty-five years old in 1917, but by the end of the decade, twenty-five percent of the incumbents were under forty-five. This may indicate that the change in language and the resulting shift of prerequisites for office holding created opportunities for men at an earlier age than when language was not such a factor. Aside from the disparities in age of incumbents, however, a study of the officials in 1917 and those in 1930 indicates that the incumbents changed slowly along with the Synod. By 1930 they were about as representative of their constituencies as the presidents of 1917 had been of theirs. The Synod retained too much of a German character to undergo a sudden revolution in leadership, but gradual changes were effected in most districts.[2]

In the Twenties the only important careers predicated on German had been firmly established before 1917. The men on their way up in the Synod during the Twenties were using English. Two good illustrations are the future Synodical president, John W. Behnken, and radio evangelist Walter A. Maier. Although Maier spoke fluent German, he used English exclusively except for a brief period during the war when he served interned Germans. Maier was one of the most extraordinary figures in the Missouri Synod. Born in 1893, he was the gifted and aggressive son of a German organ-maker who had immigrated in the late nineteenth century. Already in his education, Maier followed a distinctive path; he held a B.A. degree from Boston University before he arrived in St. Louis for seminary training. And after his schooling in St. Louis he returned East to work on a doctorate at Harvard.

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[1] This trend is documented by another index of Americanization, support for Sunday schools, which were resisted by the old guard as competitors to the parochial school. In 1918 about 44% of the officials had Sunday schools; in 1930, 83%. SYB, 1918, 1930.

[2] The percentage of officials born in Germany was the same in 1930 as in 1917: 30%.

The lists of officials were taken from the Lutheran Annual (CPH), 1917 and 1930. Biographical information was obtained from personnel records, CHI; statistics on congregations from SYB, 1919--the first year language information that was useful was included--and 1930. The words "about" and "approximately" are employed deliberately to caution against using the percentages for more than indication of general trends, and also because, in a limited number of cases, various pieces of information were unavailable.

In 1920 he was called to become executive secretary of the young people's organization, the Walther League. His dynamic work with the league, and especially his vigorous editing of the Walther League Messenger, brought him to general attention. Maier greatly increased the size of the magazine, contributing in the early years a large percentage of the articles himself. His English style was arresting, lively and forceful. The initials W. A. M. at the end of his articles formed an apt designation, and became his sobriquet.

In 1922 Maier, at the age of 29, was called to a professorship at Concordia Seminary. By that time, too, his talent as an orator was becoming known. In that same year, he spoke at the noon downtown Lenten services in St. Louis; beginning in 1925 he became a regular speaker at an annual Luther Day mass celebration at Ocean Grove, New Jersey. The many Reformation mass events celebrating the quadricentennial of Luther's catechism in 1929 again put Maier in demand as a speaker. Naturally all of these engagements were in English. By vastly increasing his audience, Lutheran radio station KFUO in St. Louis provided the most important springboard for Maier's career. Ultimately he was to become the greatest radio evangelist of his time.[1]

The early career of John W. Behnken was not so flamboyant as Maier's, but illustrates equally well the language change. Behnken was born in Texas in 1884. For his preseminary training he attended the preparatory school at Winfield, Kansas; this institution had been established by the old English Synod and emphasized English preparation. After Behnken's graduation from the seminary in 1906 he returned to a parish in his native state. One of Behnken's classmates at the seminary was Alfred Doerffler, who became a pastor in St. Louis and was active in the early movement beginning in 1917 to hold downtown noon Lenten services in St. Louis. Since these services were aimed at the general public, finding speakers for them was not always easy; the man had to be fluent in unaccented, idiomatic English, with an ability to state simply and apply concretely a basic theme in a short time. Probably through Doerffler's influence, Behnken was invited to be one of the speakers at the 1920 series. He was an immediate success and was consistently invited back thereafter.[1] In 1925 a volume of his sermons for these services was published.[2] Further exposure came in 1926 when he gave the English sermon at the dedication of the newly-built seminary in St. Louis; at this occasion President Pfotenhauer preached the German sermon.

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[1] For a popular account of Maier's life and career, see Paul L. Maier, A Man Spoke, A World Listened (New York, 1963).

In the meantime Behnken held official positions in his own Texas district. He was elected second vice-president in 1919, and by 1926 was president of that district. He became the second vice-president of the Synod in 1929. In 1935 he was elected to the Synodical presidency--the first American-born president, elected just three years short of the one hundredth anniversary of the Stephanite Saxon immigration.[3]

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Regardless of any reservations of the old guard, after the events of 1918 there was no turning back the growing use of English. Post-war Americanism would have prevented it in any case, but by the Twenties, Missouri Synod Lutherans were too much involved in American life to make returning to the German Lutheran ghetto a live option. During the Twenties the Synod's constituency was caught up with all Americans by the population shifts, the trend toward more education, the increase in leisure time, and the use of the latest advances in transportation and communication.[1] As the tempo of life in America speeded up, so did that of acculturation in the Missouri Synod.

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[1] Interview with Doerffler, March 8, 1963.

[2] Noonday Sermons. In 1923 he was commissioned by the Ways and Means Committee to write an important English tract, Blessings of Giving, for the collection of a large building fund.

[3] For Behnken's brief reminiscences, written for a popular audience, see his This I Recall (CPH, 1964), published after my own research was complete. At several points it corroborates the above outline of his early career.

Naturally the language question was not immediately settled. As late as 1921, the Synodical Board of Directors, represented chiefly, it seems, by President Pfotenhauer, denied an appropriation to the preparatory school in Winfield, Kansas until the congregation there instituted German services every month (German services had been held in the college chapel). Community pressure was very strong against German and the college faculty asked Pfotenhauer to endorse the postponement of German services. The president refused, however, responding instead with the statement that if public sentiment was so strong in Winfield, then the institution should be moved elsewhere.[1]

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[1] This participation was evidenced by the purchase by a Missouri Synod group of Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, in 1925, and by the establishment of campus chaplaincies at secular institutions; by Theodore Graebner's book of vacation devotions, Touring with God (CPH, 1927); and by St. Louis radio station, KFUO, established in 1924.

What the automobile could do to church life was indicated already in 1915 by a two page Overland auto advertisement in the Literary Digest. The first picture, captioned "The Sunday Before," portrayed a family in various states of lassitude and ennui. The second, "The Sunday After," showed the family joyfully entering their just-purchased Overland for a long ride. 1295 (Feb. 13, 1915), 224-225.

The Lutheraner still tried to maximize the number of those who needed German and the future length of this need. In 1921, for instance, Fuerbringer argued that the distribution of the Lutheran Annual and its German counterpart, the Amerikanischer Kalendar--a distribution that was weighted more than any other toward the German edition--was the true reflection of the language proportion in the Synod.[2] He ignored the fact that those who read English had a greater quantity and a more varied amount of reading matter from which to choose; the Annual thus had more competition and engendered less loyalty than the Kalendar.

These were no more than minor delaying tactics, however. How inexorable the language change became in the Twenties is indicated by various statistics. Circulation figures for the two main organs of the Synod are given in Figures 2 and 3. Several facts brought out by these circu-

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[1] Martin Graebner to Graebner, Oct. 7, 1921; Graebner to Martin Graebner, Oct. 13, 1921, TG 61. Incidents mentioned by Martin Graebner were recalled independently by Dr. Adolf Meyer, son of the Winfield president. Interview, Oct. 28, 1962. Unfortunately, the Board of Directors records are, as usual, cryptic about the matter. Min., 210908A-210908D.

[2] DL, LXXVII (1921), 168. The two publications were mainly a roster of pastors, teachers, and congregations in the Synod, prefaced by thirty or forty pages of suggested daily Bible readings based on the church year, and insipid inspirational anecdotes.

FIGURE 2

CIRCULATION OF THE LUTHERAN WITNESS AND LUTHERANER[1]
(In thousands)

Year	Witness	Lutheraner
1914	5	
1916	9	49
1917	12	48
1918	19	
1919	75	
1921	29	38
1923	29	37
1924	32	37
1925	34	37
1926	34	35
1927	34	34
1928	34	33
1929	34	31
1930	28	31
1931	30	26
1932	27	23
1933	24	19
1934	32	22
1935	38	22

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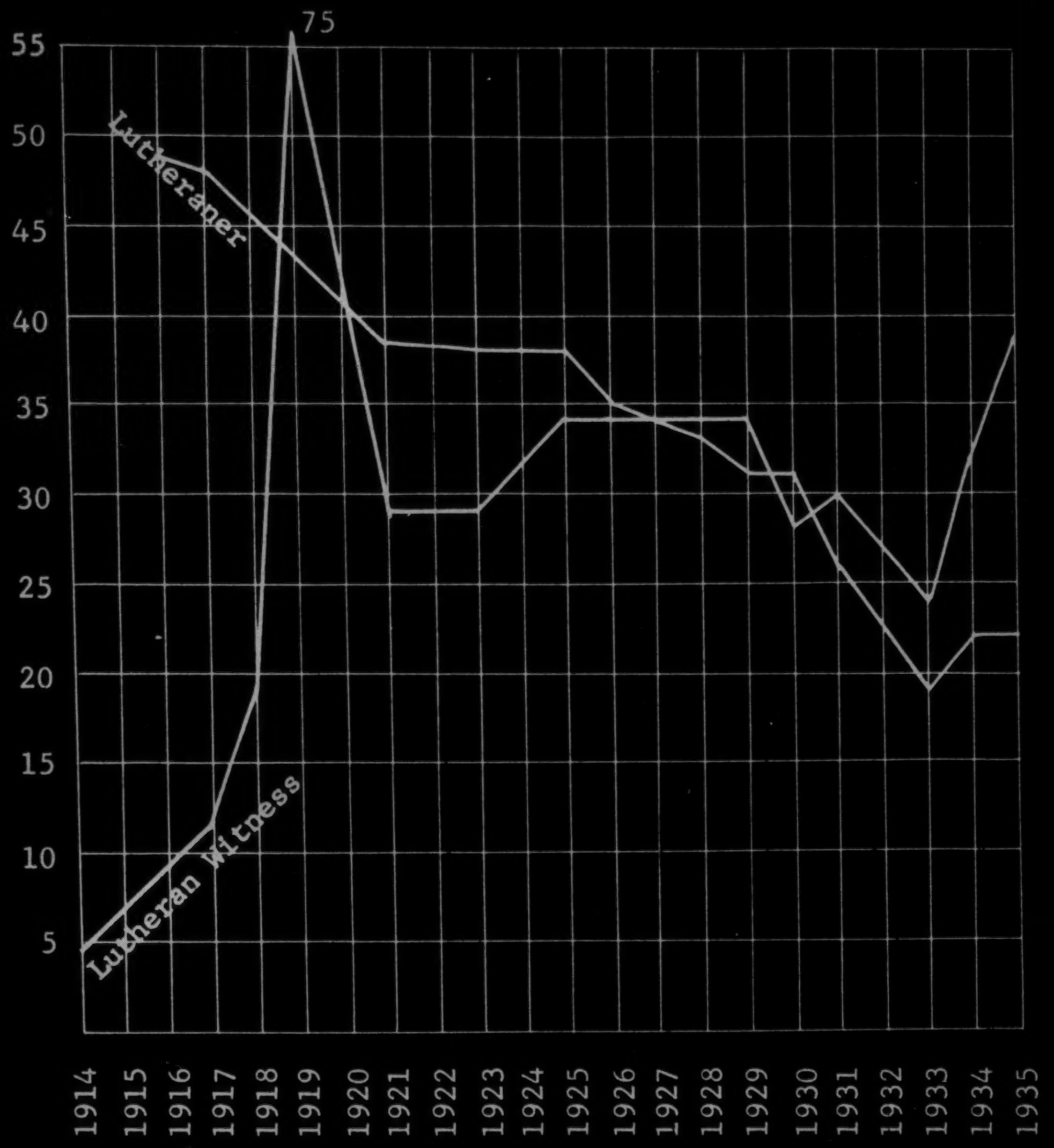
[1] Compiled from figures given in LW, XXXIII (1914), 178; XXXVII (1918), 111; XXXIX (1920), 41; DL, LXXVII (1921), 168; SYB, 1937, 179; and CPH records.

No information was found where no figure is given between 1914 and 1923. The disproportionately high Witness figure for 1919 was due to a Lutheran Laymen's League campaign. These statistics are troublesome for there was not clear cut agreement on circulation as opposed to numbers printed. After 1923 the totals given represent the smallest number printed of any issue in the respective year, rounded off to the nearest thousand.

For the Reformation quadricentennial in 1917, the same number (110,000) of a special issue of both the Witness and

FIGURE 3

CIRCULATION OF THE LUTHERAN WITNESS AND LUTHERANER
(In thousands)



Lutheraner was printed. DL, LXXIII (1917), 365. But on the same occasion, 525,000 German tracts as against only 225,000 English tracts were printed. DL, LXXIII (1917), 52. The disparity may, however, have been due to the large numbers of English tracts distributed by the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau.

lation totals are especially striking. The first is the meteoric rise in the circulation of the Witness between 1914 and 1921. Quite apparently, there was a large potential audience for an English periodical; the level of acculturation of a sizable percentage of the constituency was appreciably higher than many of the old guard recognized. Yet, the plateau reached by the Witness in the middle Twenties is equally significant. Once past the war, attrition, rather than the Witness, lowered the subscription total of the Lutheraner. Not until the Depression was the gap between the circulation totals of the two periodicals a decisive one.

Statistics for the Lutheraner demonstrate the size and strength of the older, German-speaking, generation. Where the younger generation stood is shown in part by circulation statistics of the official Synodical publications for young people, the Lutherisches Kinder und Jugendblatt, the Young Lutherans' Magazine, and the Concordia Junior Messenger. According to Concordia Publishing House figures, in 1923 the German magazine had 36% of the combined circulation of the three; by 1930 this had shrunk to 26%. For young adults in the Synod, the Walther League Messenger was entirely in English, and had, moreover, no German equivalent.

The percentage of books, as well as the total number of books, produced in English by Concordia Publishing House also rose dramatically in this period. Excluding serials and reprints, the number of titles issued each triennium is given in Figure 4 as reported to the triennial conventions of the Synod. From these lists the approximate percentage of English titles was calculated.

FIGURE 4

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH TITLES
RELEASED BY CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE

Triennium	Total Titles Published	Percentage in English
1911-1913	55	40
1914-1916	57	49
1917-1919	73	70
1920-1922	78	76
1923-1925	80	86
1926-1928	118	90

Prior to 1918 there was no blank on the parish statistical report distributed by the Synod for the pastor to list the number of services he conducted in English. Some clergymen did, however, note such information in their remarks on the form. In 1918 a blank for language was finally inserted, but none for the total number of services conducted, so that the information received was not as valuable as it should have been. The total number of congregations conducting at least one English service a month is given for selected years in Figure 5. Also included is the percentage of the total number of congregations in the Synod formed by these parishes with English services.

FIGURE 5

CONGREGATIONS HOLDING ONE OR MORE ENGLISH SERVICES PER MONTH, SELECTED YEARS, 1900-1919[1]

Year	Congregations	Percentage of Total Parishes
1900	93	4
1905	376	15
1910	471	18
1916	570	15
1917	596	18
1918	1,689	52
1919	2,492	76

Beginning in 1919 the statistician of the Synod began a comprehensive survey of the language of services. On the basis of the percentage of services conducted each month in English, each parish was then placed in the category, All German, More German than English, Half and Half, More English than German, or All English. To find a "German percentage" of the whole Synod a complex formula was worked out. Measured against the total baptized Synodical membership, the percentage formed by the baptized membership in the All

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[1] Absolute figures from SYB, 1937, 178; percentages calculated on the basis of figures on p. 152.

German congregations was added to three-fourths of the like percentage formed by those in the More German than English parishes, one half of the Half and Half, and one-quarter of the More English than German.

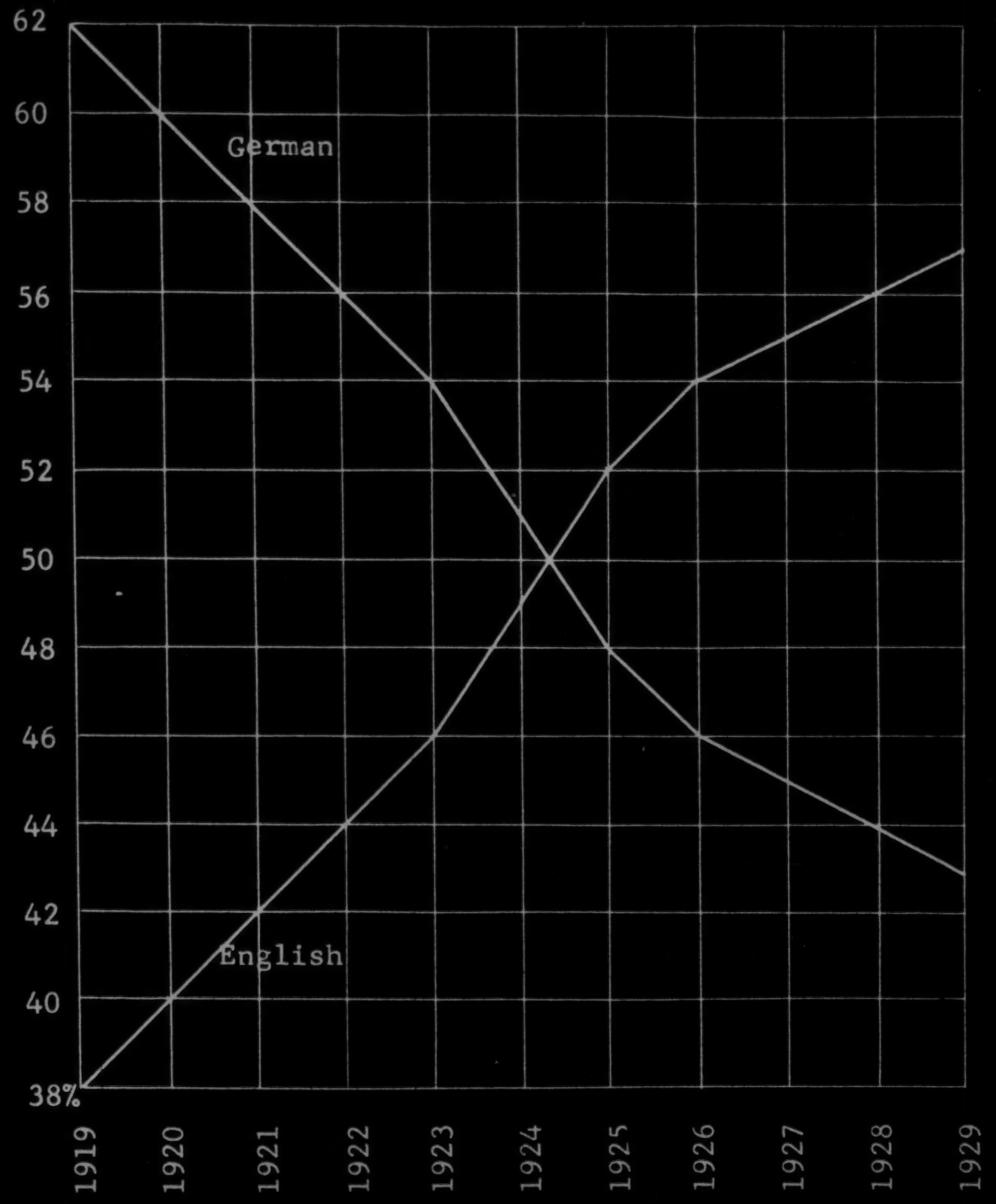
Naturally the result was somewhat arbitrary, for pastors did not report the attendance at the respective services. For instance, where one service in each language was held weekly, the overwhelming majority of the congregation might attend the English, yet, statistically, half the congregation would be credited to the German service. Crude as they are, however, the figures do show approximate trends and are reproduced in graph form in Figure 6.

While such as graph as Figure 6 is valuable for a picture of the general trend, it slurs over certain subtleties. For finer study the annual percentage of the total North American baptized membership formed by the members in parishes at the extreme ends of the language scale (All German parishes, More German than English, and All English) was calculated from respective issues of the Statistical Yearbook, and is given in Figure 7.

A number of generalizations may be made on the basis of these figures. First, these statistics corroborate evidence already cited that the war was a cataclysmic event. In the twelve months ending in February, 1918, the Lutheran Witness gained 6,000 new subscribers--one-third of its total subscription list, and at least 15% of the much larger

FIGURE 6

PERCENTAGE OF SERVICES CONDUCTED IN GERMAN AND ENGLISH



Lutheraner circulation.[1] Between 1917 and 1921, the Lutheraner lost 20% of its circulation. The largest triennial increase in the percentage of publications in English by CPH came in the 1917-1920 period. The very fact that 1918 was the first year in which the Statistical Yearbook was published in English and included an organized survey

FIGURE 7

PERCENTAGE OF NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP IN SELECTED LANGUAGE CATEGORIES, ACCORDING TO THE PERCENTAGES OF ENGLISH SERVICES

Year	All German	More German than English	All English
1919	16	37	8
1920	14	36	8
1921	12	34	8
1922	12	31	9
1923	10	28	10
1924	8	25	10
1925	7	24	11
1926	6	22	12
1927	5	18	13
1928	5	17	14
1929	4	16	15

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[1] LW, XXXVII (1918), 76.

on language demonstrates the attention that subject was getting.[1]

After the war the rate of change progressed at a much more modest--though equally sure--pace, a pace apparently unaffected by the debate raging over language. The relative circulation of periodicals and the language of services both point to the mid-Twenties as the time when the balance finally and irreversibly shifted. The reversal of the positions of the two languages in the decade 1919-1929, as shown on Figure 6, is so precise that it seems mechanical.

Furthermore, from Figure 7 it is obvious that in the decade after 1919, the use of German as the exclusive or nearly exclusive language of the parish declined sharply. Yet, the use of English as an exclusive language did not rise at quite a commensurate rate. Although almost all congregations were introducing increasing amounts of English, to drop German precipitously would have been both unwise and unjust. All statistics agree, then, that in the Twenties, the Missouri Synod lost much of its ethnically-centered character, but retained more or less of a German accent.

8

Though useful, statistics cannot evaluate objectively the degree of confidence behind rhetoric. To assess the state of mind, one must turn to events in the process of linguistic transition which had symbolic importance at the time.[1]

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[1] Very likely the 1918 increase over the previous year in the number of parishes using English was not due entirely to the introduction of new report forms, though one may argue this point. However, the dramatic rise in 1919 was beyond dispute directly caused by the war.

At the 1920 triennial convention, for the first time in the history of the Missouri Synod, the opening service was held in the church of a congregation which was entirely English; and for the first time also, there was an English address at this service.[2] At the same convention, Concordia Publishing House announced it was discontinuing the publication of Sunday school leaflets in German for lack of demand.[3]

When the convention met in 1923, a petition to make English the official language of the proceedings was on the docket. The petition was turned down.[4] The same was done in 1926, but in that year the convention agreed to print the complete proceedings in both languages.[5]

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[1] On the district level, Leonhard Heidemann ("Acceptance of the English language in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod" [unpublished Master's thesis, Iowa State College, 1950]) and Paul Dietz ("The Transition from German to English in the Missouri Synod from 1910-1947" [unpublished B.D. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1949]), have given a fairly complete list of linguistic milestones; therefore I have not attempted to duplicate or reproduce their work here.

[2] LW, XXXIX (1920), 222.

[3] Pro., 1920, 69. In a referendum, only 214 out of 3,000 possible responded to the question of the German leaflets. LW, XXXIX (1920), 335.

[4] English was already allowed on the floor. Ver., 1923, 141; LW, XLII (1923), 219.

[5] Previously the English version had been a summary of the German. Ver., 1926, 239-240.

Pastors continued through the Twenties to use much German at least in theological discussions. In 1921 less than one-quarter of the essays read at district conventions were in English; as late as 1930, barely half used English.[1] Yet English was increasingly the language in which even the clergy thought and which they used for all but the formalities of religion. Fuerbringer related the case of an Eastern District vice-president who closed a convention discussion which had been in English with, "now let us all join in praying: 'Unsern Ausgang segne Gott.'"[2] Even where they continued German, pastors had moved out of the old immigrant community. In 1922 some pastors in Iowa complained to Franz Pieper, editor of Lehre und Wehre, that the magazine carried too much theological news from Germany and not enough from America. The younger men, especially, expressed disinterest in the reports on the German state church.[3]

That pastors used German when discussing points of theology is not surprising in view of their education provided by the Synod. As late as the 1915-16 school year, only three courses in the entire three-year seminary curriculum were in English.[4] Writing in 1920, Graebner found, "on the basis of seven years' reading of English sermons that the English which our boys get at the colleges is deplorably deficient. Style, diction, idiom, spelling, far below the standards which ought to prevail in a six year college. 'Schuelerhaft' is the word; uncouth diction, awkward sentence structure, lack of simplest rhetorical equipment, such is the sentence one is constrained to pass on most of these productions."[1]

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[1] SYB, 1921, 131. The figure for 1930 was calculated from individual district reports.

[2] DL, LXXXI (1925), 277.

[3] Theo. Hanssen to Redaktion v. Lehre & Wehre, July 1922, Pieper Papers, B 7.

[4] Katalog der Lehrenstalten, 1916-17. Thereafter, unfortunately for the historian, the catalogues were printed

During the Twenties, however, the pressures of the war for change were reinforced by the character of the student body. By 1928 Graebner reported a "marked improvement in the fluency and ease of the English style and diction used by the Seminary students in the last ten years."[2] Courses continued to be given in German, but, according to one student in 1928, professors lecturing in German had to repeat their remarks in English, a procedure hardly conducive to pedagogy. Even students who knew German took their notes in English.[3] The rapid deterioration of correct German among seminary graduates was indicated by the enthusiasm with which Ludwig Fuerbringer hailed the publication of Otto Hattstaedt's Deutsche Grammatik fuer Amerikanische

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in English, thereby eliminating an easy check on the language of instruction in a given course.

[1] Graebner to O. L. Hohenstein, April 27, 1920, TG 69.

[2] AM, XVIII (1928), 112

[3] M.L.K. in AM, XIX (1928), 110.

hoehere Schulen by CPH in 1925. Fuerbringer recommended the book as a reference work for adults who had lost a feeling for idiomatic German. He pointed to an appendix correcting common mistakes as particularly valuable to necessarily bilingual pastors and teachers.[1] According to the appendix, in Americanized German, *Helpen Sie sich zu Kartoffeln* was used for *Nehmen Sie Kartoffeln*; *Welche Zeit ist es* for *Wieviel Uhr ist es*. One bought a *Lot* rather than a *Bauplatz*. A hospital patient *einer Operation untergehen* instead of *eine Operation an sich vollziehen lassen*. And, though a German student *sein Examen machen*, his American counterpart *sein Examen nehmen*.[2]

That important changes in student body and in the seminary itself took place during the Twenties is also indicated by a striking comparison. In 1917 and again in 1920, the English District petitioned the national body for better provision for instruction in English at Synodical schools and seminaries.[3] By 1929 the scales shifted so far that when the Synodical convention met, it adopted a resolution noting the importance of German and reminding seminary faculties and students of the need for both languages. The resolution authorized professors of German to hold conferences to agree on ways and means to improve teaching of the language.[1] From the viewpoint of language in the seminaries, the single most remarkable event occurred in 1928 when Franz Pieper celebrated his fiftieth year at Concordia, St. Louis; all the speeches but one were in English.[2]

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[1] *DL*, LXXXI (1925), 325.

[2] Hattstaedt, pp. 170-72.

[3] *Ein.*, 1917, 40; 1920, 169. In 1922 the district decided to try once more at the 1923 Synodical convention, but apparently did not. *LW*, XLI (1922), 266.

Concordia Publishing House advertisements of pastoral aids in German further reveal the extent of the language transition among Missouri Synod clergy. In 1925, for instance, an advertisement for Leichenreden by C. C. Schmidt noted that now all but the older generation of pastors welcome occasional assistance in German.[3] Similarly, when advertising William Arndt's Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tuer, CPH mentioned that the original plan was to write the notice in German. "On second thought, however, we concluded it would be better not to do that as the readers we are addressing are those ambilingual preachers who by force of circumstances have gotten out of the habit or--should we say?--never have acquired the habit of thinking in German? . . . Our clergy a generation ago needed special helps in English-language work. Today it calls for special help in German-language work."[4] Finally, in 1929 the triennial convention agreed to permit CPH to merge Lehre und Wehre and the Magazin fuer Homiletik into the Theological Monthly.[1] This left the Synod without a theological journal titled in German for the first time since 1855.

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[1] Pro., 1929, 57.

[2] And that one was by Graebner. LW, XLVII (1928), 365.

[3] TM, V (1925), back cover following p. 160.

[4] TM, IX (1929), back cover following p. 192.

The progress of the language change showed up even in the fiction of the period. The Walther League Messenger in 1928 carried a story by G. L. Wind in which the loyal son of a widowed mother dates a girl from his office and, incidentally, leads her to church. At one point Wind wrote of the mother,

> That her John would fall in love with a Scotch-English girl had never entered her dreams either. Both she and her dead husband had been of German parentage. In that she had been plainly prejudiced, of course, which she now fairly and squarely admitted to herself. There were girls just as fine among what her husband was accustomed to term 'outsiders,' provided they were Christians or showed willingness to become such. . . . In her heart this old mother now thanked the Lord that He had made her own people to see the necessity of a Sunday English church service, which, till some years before, had actually been deemed unnecessary.[2]

The most intangible index of language change, but one of the most revealing, was the attitude of those who desired much increased use of English. The great bulk of their most anxious criticism was concentrated between 1918 and the early Twenties. By the mid-Twenties, although calls for more English were every bit as adamant as earlier, the critics seemed to be relaxing.[3] In a few years they would be ready to agree with the 1929 CPH advertisement: "the so-called language question . . . has answered itself."[1] In 1930 Witness editor Sommer stated that he had not heard of any congregational difficulty caused by the language question within the past five years.[2]

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[1] Pro., 1929, 137.

[2] XXXIV, 346.

[3] Statistically there does not seem to be much basis for a great upsurge of optimism in the later Twenties. The steadily increasing confidence of the critics from the

The language transition had begun already in the mid-nineteenth century, but had been temporarily reversed by the flood tides of German immigration. The change continued, however, especially in secular life until finally the church was one of the last remaining bastions of the German language in America. At the point where one might have expected at best a gradual and costly shift to English in the Synod, the First World War dealt German a staggering blow. Thereafter, in spite of pockets of continuing resistance, the change in language progressed much more swiftly. Attendant problems of translating the German Lutheran heritage and of developing bases other than language for support of the schools were worked out with a reasonable degree of success. Partly with the help of war hysteria, then, the initial hurdle to assimilation was overcome. By 1932, the language change had progressed, or the American Lutheran had mellowed, to the

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mid-Twenties on should lead to caution, therefore, against putting too much emphasis on statistical indices of language change.

[1] TM, IX (1929), back cover following p. 192.

[2] LW, IL (1930), 196. Presumably the statement is to be taken more as a justifiable exaggeration to indicate trends rather than as literally correct.

point where even that magazine could comment on the slow, but steady rate of change. "To some the shift may seem desperately slow, but they will find consolation in the fact that it is inexorable in its certainty."[1]

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[1] XV (1932), 1625.

CHAPTER V

TO ALL NATIONS

More than any other event, the First World War brought to an end the German-American community as it had been known for nearly three-quarters of a century. The war dramatized the decline two decades earlier of immigration from Germany. It also brought irresistible pressure to bear upon every aspect of immigrant life. As a part of immigrant society, the Missouri Synod was thus faced with a bleak future. Gathering the German-Lutheran diaspora into congregations and educating the young had been the Synod's chief functions and its appeal since the mid-nineteenth century; the phenomenal growth of the Synod had paralleled the mass influx from Germany and had been predicated upon a cohesive immigrant community. Largely deprived of both by 1918, the Synod had either to broaden its potential constituency or stagnate. Instead of merely gathering in the newcomers from Germany, the Synod had now to carry Missouri Lutheranism to Americans generally.

Fortunately, the war also provided stimulus and self-confidence to those ready for wider missionary horizons. Concern for English missions had existed well before the war; even in the nineteenth century the Synod maintained an anemic board for English missions. Such interest was growing in the years immediately prior to the war. Yet pre-war statements were few, scattered, and lacking in the force and urgency characterizing those after 1918.[1]

In 1918, however, the American Lutheran hailed the current state legislation against German in schools as a blessing in disguise. The editor believed that "the accelerated transition from the German language . . . will open up a splendid vista of tremendous missionary opportunity. It is bound to revolutionize the missionary viewpoint of those who, alas, have clung too long to the idea that the duty of the Lutheran Church on the field of home missions consisted in gathering in the stray Lutherans, particularly of German extraction."[2]

This was strong medicine, even in a magazine without Synodical endorsement. The dosage had been even stronger when administered in the Witness a few months earlier at the height of the anti-German drive. Under the headline, "Our Great Opportunity," the Synod was asked what it was going to do about the sixty million unchurched, English-speaking people in the United States. Argued the editor, the time is past when we could correctly limit our mission work to

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[1] See, for example, two articles in 1915 that bear an American Lutheran Publicity Bureau stamp. LW, XXIV, 200, 211.

[2] I, 8 (1918), 1.

German immigration; "real missionary work . . . we shall be able to do only among the English-speaking population." The Witness pleaded with German congregations not to throw their weight against English missions.[1]

Still, a reappraisal of missionary policy was not so dictated by the wartime persecution as was the resolution of the language question. Missouri Synod congregations were being forced to use English in their services, but not to win converts from outside the immigrant community. There was a crucial gap between admitting the use of English to hold the Synod's young people, and demanding on theological grounds an effort to bring the Gospel to fellow Americans: the gap was acculturation. As late as 1916 a German paper could review an English prayer book and note that it would be a welcome gift for those who could no longer pray in German. As Graebner commented in the Witness, "the supposition appears to be that there cannot by any conceivable means be a market for a prayer-book for such as never could pray in German."[2]

Against the shift to an American mission policy was the whole weight of tradition and sentiment. After some experimentation in its early years, the Missouri Synod had settled on a system of traveling ministers, the Reiseprediger. According to the instructions drawn up at the first Synodical convention, such a pastor was to move into a new territory and search out Germans, more particularly German Lutherans, especially confessional German Lutherans. Usually, after the preliminary survey, a more or less fixed itinerary of preaching places was established; the pastor then traveled between these stations, often taking several weeks for a circuit. As more German settlers moved into the area, as the little preaching stations grew in size, congregations were organized and called their own individual pastors. German language parochial schools were begun as soon as possible, strengthening church ties and attracting more German immigrants to the congregation.[1]

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[1] LW, XXXVII (1918), 178.

[2] XXXV (1916), 277-78.

The Reiseprediger system followed the American frontier wherever German-Lutherans settled. It first moved west from the central Mississippi Valley, then jumped to California, spread along the West Coast, and began to close on the arid plains. As the growth of the Missouri Synod testified, the system was highly successful.

As a successful institution, the Reiseprediger--and the ethnically-limited mission--became the accepted evangelical tradition. Even in the twentieth century, calls extended to pastors specified German-Americans as the potential constituency.[1] As was recognized at the time, the theological implications of such a view were enormous: if Lutheranism could not be translated into English, then the Lutheran church was indeed a sect, not the Church. And if only Germans could be good Lutherans, then the Missouri Synod was espousing a curious sort of ethnic predestination.[2]

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[1] A survey of the institution and early years of the Reiseprediger is Karl Wyneken's, "The Development of the Itinerant Ministries in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1847-1865" (unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1963).

Manifestly, the Reiseprediger was an anachronism in twentieth century, urban America, all the more so after the events of 1918. Eventually the German circuit rider had to dismount and speak English. Yet the Reiseprediger tradition lived on, partly through a hope of renewed immigration to the United States. Some were not ready to accept the signs that the day of mass German immigration (and of the powerful German-American community) was over. "There is an evident tendency to exalt the importance of the German work of our body," Graebner wrote in 1920. "The expected Masseneinwanderung--7,000,000--from German will be worked."[3]

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[1] The fixation on the diaspora was evident even in foreign missions. In 1924 an article on mission opportunities began, "In Sudamerika gibt es viele Deutsche." DL, LXXX, 129. As late as 1920, none of the Synod's missionaries in Argentina knew any Spanish. LW, XXXIX (1920), 170.

It should be noted here, however, that this chapter is concerned specifically with missions in America and excludes, in addition, blind and deaf missions.

For a study of the intricacies of missions to non-Germans by nineteenth century Missouri Synod, see Frederick Dean Lueking, "The Tension between the Confessional and Evangelical Traditions in Shaping the Missouri Synod Conception and Practice of Missions" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago Divinity School, 1960).

[2] Graebner to Theo. Hoyer, Feb. 12, 1920, TG 41.

[3] Graebner to Otto Erbe, May 27, 1920, TG 61.

Even the Lutheraner shared the expectation of immigration. In 1921 Fuerbringer declared, "immigrants whom we can reach through the means of the German language will again come as soon as the hindrances are removed which now stand in the way because peace is not yet concluded."[1] The rationale behind such a prophecy could easily degenerate into a feeling that Germans had the first claim on the Lutheran message and that Americans were of secondary importance in the mission of the Synod.

Neither the American Lutheran nor the Witness took formal cognizance of such arguments, but Lindemann did run articles which stated flatly that the work among the German diaspora was over.[2] Witness editor Graebner wrote privately in 1920, "our call is to America,--not to the Deutsche Masseneinwanderung. If we can serve this problematical Masseneinwanderung, good and well, but our call is to this country. A Tommasino, a MacNulty, a Hooker is as much to me as a Schultze, a Mueller,--not more, but just as much."[3] Besides, he argued, the modern German immigrants are a "radical, apostate lot."[4] By 1926 the Lutheraner and Synodical mission officials were ready to agree publicly that the post-war immigration was generally hostile to the Gospel.[5] The case had been largely laid to rest already in 1922, however, when O. H. Restin, immigrant missionary in New York, stated that quota laws and high cost of travel had killed chances of a mass immigration after the war.[1] In that year only 17,931 immigrants from Germany entered the United States; German immigration rose thereafter, but in only two years throughout the decade did it exceed 50,000.[2] The course of events was more important than the logic of Graebner or Lindemann in turning the Synod away from this mission field. The facts were too clear to brook any opposition.

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[1] DL, LXXVII (1921), 57.

[2] II (1919), 79-80, 82-83; IV (1921), 100.

[3] Graebner to W. G. Polack, May 28, TG 61.

[4] Graebner to Otto Erbe, May 27, 1920, TG 61.

[5] DL, LXXXI (1925), 25, 350; Pro., 1926, 86.

Better-founded support for the *Reiseprediger* tradition came through the needs of recently-arrived German settlers in the northern tier of the western states and the western Canadian provinces. No responsible churchman could argue that these people did not deserve Lutheran ministrations in German; in fact, before the war, even the *Witness* referred to the Northwest as the "greatest mission field of our entire Synod."[3] Not even the most Americanized editor could deny the immensely popular appeal of these Northwest missions. The romance of the never-ending battle against nature on the northern great plains spiced many a column in the *Lutheraner*, *Witness*, and *Messenger*.

Yet the appeal of these missions posed a dilemma for those anxious to see the Missouri Synod move into American mission work. In continuing the Reiseprediger tradition, including the use of German, the Northwest missions perpetuated the diaspora mentality. Psychologically the Northwest missions had significance all out of proportion to the numbers involved; as late as 1929, this territory accounted for under 5% of the Synod's baptized membership. Yet, as long as the old guard could vicariously relive the missionary days of the Middle West through the Canadian missionary riding over the countryside asking, "Wohnen Deutsche hier, deutsche Lutheraner?," the tie to the past remained. The result was something like perpetuating a broken love affair by a recorded voice: the experience is not very productive and the reminders of past allegiances slow the search for new companionship. For those not adverse to a glacial rate in the change to English missions, the Northwest was a convenient rationalization during most of the Twenties.

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[1] *DL*, LXXVIII, 393.

[2] *Historical Statistics*, p. 56.

[3] XXXIV (1915), 216.

Even for those willing to acknowledge the need for English missions, the work in North Dakota, Montana, and Canada was a warning to make haste slowly in the linguistic change. The Lutheraner called attention to the fact that the Presbyterians and Methodists were not discontinuing German missions now that the war was over; certainly then the Lutherans should not abandon their own, these German immigrants. The reason the other synods were not doing well in Canada, said the Lutheraner, was because they had dropped German for English too soon and thus were unable to minister properly.[1] By the late Twenties, editor Fuerbringer said less and less about language; however, his reticence was made up for by John T. Mueller, by that time writing regularly for the Lutheraner. Even though in his other literary work he used English, Mueller repeatedly referred in the Lutheraner to the necessity for continuing the German language.[2]

In addition to the weight of tradition in the Synod, the development of an American mission policy was hampered by a host of practical problems. It was not easy to escape attitudes developed in years previous when immigrants were joining the church faster than one could care for them. "Stay at home," a veteran counseled a young pastor, "so that the people can find you."[3] Missouri Synod pastors now had to accustom themselves to a considerably less receptive audience. "There was a time, not many years ago," said F. P. Wilhelm in 1920,

> when the 'Macedonian cry' was heard in the land. And when, in response to such urgent appeals, we went to them and held the first service, when for the first time they were permitted to join again in the old familiar Lutheran hymns, when the sweet, simple, comforting Gospel was preached--oh, the tears of joy and gratitude which then coursed down the cheeks especially of the old fathers and mothers. Today in opening up new missions do we ever see tears of joy?[4]

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[1] LXXIV (1918), 390; LXXV (1919), 18, 74; LXXVII (1921), 57.

[2] LXXXII (1926), 57, 111, 151; LXXXIII (1927), 290, 435.

[3] Quoted in AL, III (1920), 82.

[4] "Zusammengesetztes Protokoll der Versammlungen der Vertreter der Missionskommissionen mit dem Vorsitzer der

To overcome such indifference, mission work among Americans necessarily involved aggressive advertising and different methods than those used by the *Reiseprediger*. But for some, publicity smacked too much of "sectarian" methods, with their loose theology, emotionalism, sawdust and tents.[1]

If, as was said at the time, the English of some pastors was so poor that even their own parishioners stayed away from English services, the difficulties of active mission work among native Americans were nearly insurmountable. Poor grammar, thick accent, and Germanisms were effective deterrents to changing missionary policy. Even members of the congregation who had become proficient in English might have trouble communicating their faith to non-Lutherans around them. They had learned and expressed their religion in German, and did not know either the English Bible or English theological terminology. The result was, as J. A. Friedrich pointed out in the *Lutheraner*, that a well-grounded Lutheran might be bested by an unsophisticated Baptist in a discussion of the sacraments.[2] After such an experience a Lutheran would hesitate to bring up theology in conversations with his neighbors and friends.

Allgemeinen Kommission fuer Innere Missions, in Detroit, Mich., Juni 15-22, '20" (mimeographed), p. 7. Hereafter cited "*Protokoll*."

[1] The discussion and role of advertising is surveyed in the following chapter.

[2] LXXX (1924), 268. See also *DL*, LXXIII (1917), 85-86.

Finally, official Synodical leadership was not ready to challenge the inertia and practical problems preventing a change in missionary orientation. President Pfotenhauer could see no good for the Synod in the war, and refused to believe that mission opportunities would be substantially increased.[1] Pfotenhauer was not opposed to missions in English, but his view of his office, his own previous experience as a Reiseprediger in the Northwest,[2] and his commitment to German made it easier to accept the traditional mission policy. At the 1920 triennial convention, for instance, President Pfotenhauer remarked on the cessation of mass immigration, but his strongest recommendation was that "our missionaries must . . . learn that one may not reckon by statistics the blessings of God."[3]

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Such advice was increasingly necessary in the years following 1917. After the exhilarating expansion of the late nineteenth century, post-war totals were distressingly small. Viewed from the 1960's, the diminished growth of the Missouri Synod during the Twenties is only a temporary recession in a continued, phenomenal expansion. But from the perspective of the Twenties, the Synod's future growth did not look nearly so inevitable. In fact, whether the Synod had much future at all was problematic. It was yet to be demonstrated that the Missouri Synod, for all its orthodoxy, cohesiveness, and strength, would be able--or willing--to translate its appeal. For the observer in the Twenties, there was a time, a frighteningly long time, when it looked as if the Synod were in a decline as sure as that of eighteenth century Lutheran groups.

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[1] Pfotenhauer to Graebner, 14 June 1918, TG 122.

[2] In Ebenezer (ed. Dau), a book of essays published to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Synod, the President's chapter was on the expansion into the Northwest. Pp. 332-47.

[3] DL, LXXVI (1920), 211.

One year after another the Statistical Yearbook appeared. Each issue seemed to be another toll in the death knell of the Missouri Synod. From 1909 to 1920 (as shown on Figure 8), the Synod's annual growth rate dropped almost every year. In 1919, for the first time in its history, the Synod had a net loss of more than 4,000 baptized members.[1] In 1920, the small district in South America gained, but for the first time, the North American districts lost 2,500 communicants. The tide reversed slightly in 1921, but five of the oldest and largest districts, whose members totaled half of the Synod, suffered a net loss of more than sixteen hundred communicants. In the decade which ended in 1926, the Central and the Northern Illinois districts,[2] with a combined membership of a quarter of the Synod's communicants, showed a loss that ran into the thousands. Ten years and yet a net

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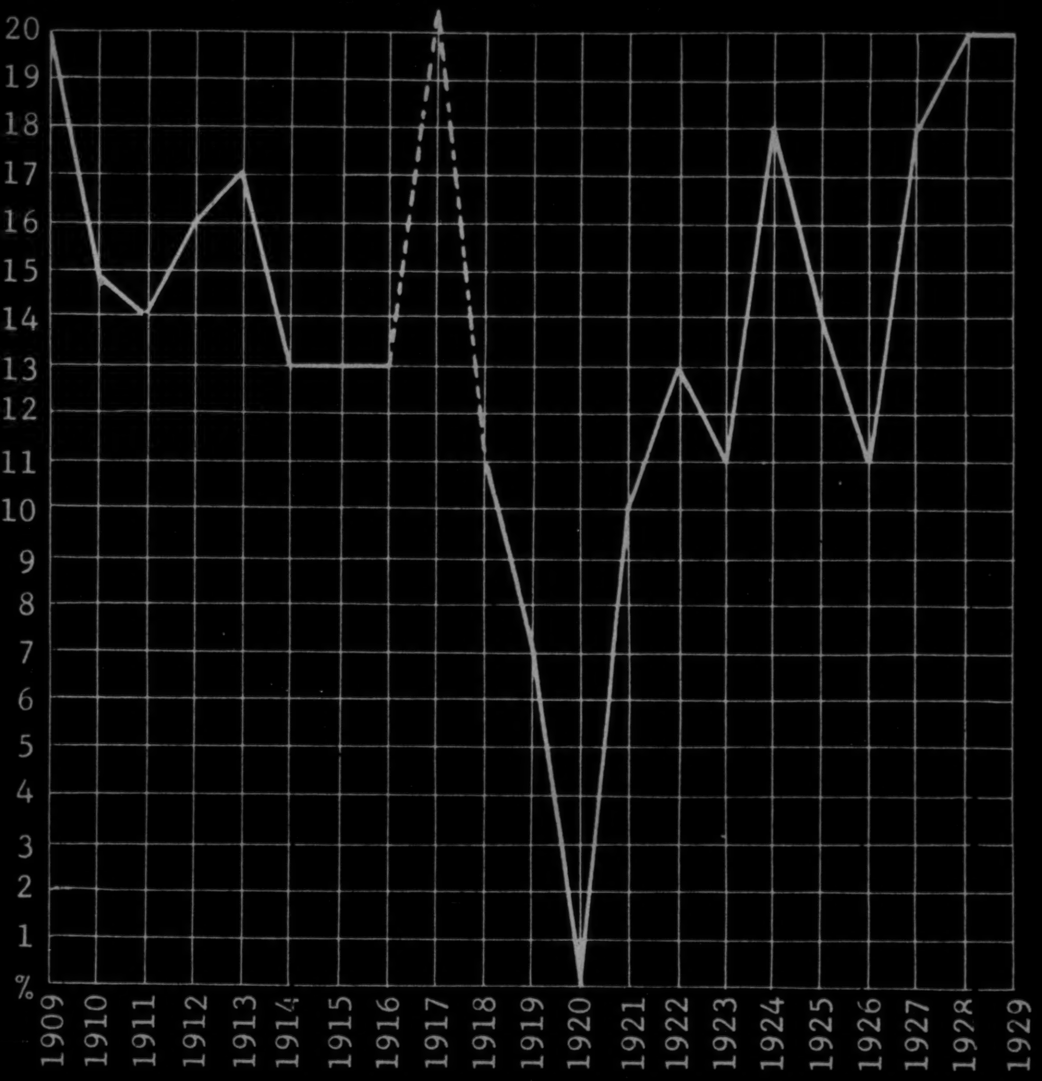
[1] Ernst Eckhardt, Synodical statistician, later claimed that this drop was due to the number of men in the armed forces. SYB, 1937, 156. If pastors did strike off their rolls men in the armed forces--something difficult to believe--the loss should have been much greater, for thirty thousand men served in the army and navy.

[2] Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and the northern third of Illinois.

FIGURE 8

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP
1909-1929[1]



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[1] Calculated from SYB, 1937, 152-53. The average annual growth between 1899 and 1909 was 2.4%. The percentage given here for 1911 is corrected for the entry of the English District. 1914 and 1915 figures are interpolated. In 1917, for the first time, when pastors did not report, instead of leaving blanks, statistics were inserted from the previous year. SYB, 1937, 156.

loss.[1]

The Canadian districts, which were the most German, and the English District increased their membership in the same decade by more than forty percent, but this only dramatized the general predicament. The Missouri Synod grew fastest at the opposite ends of the language scale, but it was unprepared to concentrate on English and dared not concentrate on German. The Synod increased by leaps and bounds in rural and the most isolated areas where its ultimate growth was circumscribed; it did poorest in the urban areas into which the majority of the population was moving.

Not every observer put the same construction on these trends. Some were not ready to accept the statistics as valid or the prognosis as pessimistic. Those who did were accused of being "pessimists, alarmists, disturbers, agitators, bolsheviks, 'Schwarzseher,' statistical jugglers."[2] Some were confident that divine intervention would save the day. "As if the effort to get a clear vision of present obligations were a refusal to recognize our utter dependence upon the grace of the Almighty God," retorted the American

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[1] Among denominations with more than one million members in 1926, the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of America (of which the Missouri Synod comprised about 80%) ranked seventh out of eleven in growth rate over the preceeding decade. The Synod's growth was below that of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the United Lutheran Church in America, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Of the major Lutheran groups, the Synodical Conference was third out of six. Religious Bodies: 1926, I, 49.

[2] AL, VII (1924), 115.

Lutheran. "But where in all Holy Writ," the editor asked, "has He promised to help us whenever we lapse into a condition of calm self-complacency and refuse to utilize fully the powers He has placed at our disposal."[1]

To the churchman who believed them, however, the growth statistics were profoundly disheartening. They could mean nothing else than the eventual demise of much that he had worked for. If he was convinced that such reverses were not the work of God, and if he was personally inclined to action, then the battle was joined.

Leading the reform group into the fray was a triumvirate of editors, the three most out-spoken advocates of activism in the Twenties: Paul Lindemann of the American Lutheran, Theodore Graebner of the Witness, and Walter A. Maier of the Messenger. They were backed by men such as John H. C. Fritz, F. J. Lankenau, F. P. Wilhelm, and F. W. Weidmann. Filling a vacuum in official leadership, these men tried to accomplish by agitation what exceeded their authority. As a rule, they had to rely on persuasion rather than official power to implement their ideas.

Their sharpest public attacks came in the October home mission numbers of the American Lutheran, annually--except for 1923--between 1921 and 1926. There was strong criticism of traditional policy in both the Witness and the Messenger, as well as in memorials to the triennial conventions during the Twenties, but only in the American Lutheran October issues could one read arguments by all three of the editorial triumvirate. Lindemann wrote in his usual calmly rational style, Maier with his customary optimism and aggressiveness, and Graebner, freed of the restraints of the official Lutheran Witness columns, with the bluntness and occasional sarcasm typical of his private correspondence.

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[1] V (1922), 111.

Yet there was never a public confrontation between the critics and the old guard; only the reform position was thoroughly aired. The old guard controlled no periodical in the Synod and probably was not anxious to do so. It would have been a contradiction to contest vigorously for a platform from which to preach complacency, passivism, and lack of evangelical initiative. Theirs was more a state of mind than a program, more pessimism than prejudice.[1]

Not all the men who remained outside the reform party were diehard reactionaries. Der Lutheraner editor Ludwig Fuerbringer, for example, knew better than to espouse an ethnically-limited Lutheranism. Though cautiously, the Lutheraner did explicitly recognize the need for English after the war and during the early Twenties.[2] Yet Fuerbringer characteristically called for preaching the Gospel in whatever language the people could understand.[1] On its face this was sound theology, but in the setting of the early Twenties, it allowed the German reader to justify his course too easily. Not until the later Twenties could the editor of the Lutheraner be included among the mission critics.

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[1] The following reconstruction of the controversy over missionary policy is necessarily incomplete, not only because of the reticence of the old guard, but also because almost all manuscript records of the Synodical Board of Home Missions in North America are apparently no longer extant.

[2] LXXVII (1921), 302; LXXIX (1923), 6; LXXX (1924), 370; LXXXI (1925), 78.

3

The critics of the Missouri Synod's mission policy concentrated on three recommendations: more English work, more attention to missions in cities and fast growing suburbs, and a rationalization of mission administration.

The need for mission work in English was naturally inherent in the policy of spreading the Gospel among Americans and had been expressed even before the war was over. But as the formerly German districts began to use English in their mission work, the reform group spotted new difficulties. For instance, a St. Louis pastor reported after canvassing an area that a housewife told him, "I can't belong to your church because I am Irish." The neighborhood Lutheran church held English services, the pastor wrote, but those on Sunday morning were German.[2] To the critics, at least, it was obvious that congregations must not only adopt English services, but must give them highest priority.

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[1] DL, LXXV (1919), 18.

[2] WLM, XXXV (1926), 18.

For Walter A. Maier, priority included the elimination of adiaphora which marked the Missouri Synod as foreign. Would our cause suffer, he asked rhetorically, "if the German signs . . . [on] our churches and schools were removed; or if the German Bible passages painted on the walls and windows on the interior were supplanted with English expressions?"[1] Paul Lindemann wanted to go even a step further; any use of German, he thought, handicapped missionary potential. The only solution was establishment of new congregations which used English exclusively.[2] However, said Lindemann, the district mission boards hesitated to start such congregations. "A few stray 'Germans,' who in our day, by the way, are people almost equally as conversant with the English language, express a preference for German as the medium of worship, and, for the sake of sentimental preference of these few, German services are instituted and the mission congregation is immediately burdened with a tremendous missionary handicap." A bi-lingual church, Lindemann argued, "has very little appeal to the unchurched American and even to the second or third generation German-American, who with his children uses the English language almost exclusively."[3]

Lindemann was the most extreme of the mission critics on this point, but even he was too practical and too humane to forbid the Gospel in German to the older generation whose understanding of theological English was imperfect.[1] Maier stated the more common position most succinctly when he called for not necessarily less German, but more English.[2]

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[1] AL, VIII (1925), 121.

[2] AL, VI (1923), 50.

[3] AL, VIII (1925), 117.

The geographical shift in mission emphasis desired by the critics was even more difficult than the language transition. However, problems were caused as much by the American environment as by factors inherent in the Synod. The transition from immigrant to American would have been strenuous at any time, even when the normative culture was fairly static. But the process was particularly trying in the 1920's, for the Synod had not only to adopt itself to American culture, but had to do so when that culture was itself undergoing rapid social change. The Synod was in somewhat the position of a missile expert attempting to land a rocket on a moon moving about an earth which is itself moving. The Synod, however, had additional problems: not only was it unversed in the rocketry of assimilation, but none of the variables could be accurately calculated and predicted.

Nowhere were these problems better illustrated than in the Synodical attempts to cope with the population shifts of the Twenties. The decade was opened by the celebrated

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[1] _AL_, XI (1928), 452.

[2] _AL_, V (1922), 116.

1920 federal census which showed that for the first time in American history, urban population surpassed rural.[1] By 1923 the exodus from the farms had reached two million annually; it remained above that figure for the rest of the decade.[2]

Simultaneously, there was a flight of the urban middle class to the suburbs.[3] This was partly an escape from southern Negroes moving to northern cities in great numbers, and from the expanding ghettos of southern and eastern Europeans. The movement was further stimulated and facilitated by the mass produced automobile, efficient public transportation, and by large investors who acquired and developed outlying areas, offering great numbers of homes on long-term credit.

The Missouri Synod constituency was very much a part of both these population shifts. In 1919 approximately seventy per cent of the Synod's congregations was located in places of under 5,000 population.[4] Slightly over half of the Synod's membership lived in what the census termed rural areas. At the other end of the scale, nearly a quarter of Synodical constituency resided in cities over 250,000--

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[1] Urban defined, perhaps debatably, as places over 5,000 population.

[2] Historical Statistics, p. 47: C 78.

[3] A contemporary study of this movement is Harlan Paul Douglass, The Suburban Trend (New York,1925).

[4] These and other 1919 statistics are based on the author's punch card analysis of individual parochial reports in the 1919 SYB. Generalizations are based on total statistics available for nearly 2,900 cases.

seventeen per cent in cities of half a million or more. In effect, the distribution of Missouri Synod Lutherans tended to be bipolar. The overwhelming majority were either in rural areas or in large cities--precisely the places most affected by the population shifts of the Twenties. Moreover, Missouri Synod Lutherans living in the cities were predominantly middle-class.[1]

Of the two population shifts, the rural-urban tendency posed fewer problems for the Synod. Even though, as Fuerbringer noted, many who moved did so with the attitude of "Good-by, God, I am going to the city,"[2] at least the Synod had congregations in the city to receive the newcomer. There was, however, leakage between the rural congregation and the city church. "Many a pastor receives and dismisses more members each year than the entire roll of the church forty years ago," observed the American Lutheran.[3] Early in the Twenties, the publishing house, at the request of the St. Louis pastoral conference, brought out a three-part transfer form to systematize procedure. One part of the form was for the member, one part was to be sent to the new pastor, the last part was an acknowledgment by the new pastor when the member joined his congregation.[1] Such a form was of value, however, only when used. Both the Witness and the American Lutheran marveled repeatedly at the carelessness of country pastors who would not take time to notify the appropriate city congregation of the coming of fellow-Lutherans.[2]

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[1] At least according to Theodore Graebner: "on Middle Street lives--the Missouri Synod, or 95 per cent of it. Few of our people are poor, a fair number have acquired great wealth, but the greatest number belongs to the class of the well-to-do." LW, XXXIX (1920), 10.

[2] DL, LXXXII (1926), 394.

[3] IX (1926), 52.

To help reduce the leakage among city-bound young people, the Walther League established an extensive hospice system. Every individual society was to have a hospice secretary to help provide advice, lodging, and work in Christian environments. In larger cities the league maintained rooming houses to provide more or less temporary quarters safe from the dangers of city life. By 1929 fourteen such hospices were operating, with a total value of about $400,000 and room for 400 guests. All but two of these hospices were established in the Twenties.[3]

As President Pfotenhauer recognized, the movement from city to suburb meant that the large congregation whose members "lived in the shadow of the parsonage" was a thing of the past.[4] In the early twentieth century, F. C.

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[1] LW, XLI (1922), 171, 223.

[2] As late as 1929 the triennial convention heard a proposal for a central clearing house to keep track of Lutherans as they moved about. LW, XLVIII (1929), 38.

[3] SYB, 1929, 185.

[4] DL, LXXXII (1926), 2.

Streufert's Chicago congregation had a baptized membership of 2,200, all within a radius of six blocks from the church.[1] But when he owned his own car, the Missouri Lutheran could live at a considerable distance from the church at which he had membership. The movement to the suburbs began already before World War I, affecting particularly the English-speaking churches--those whose members were most assimilated into the American community.[2] By 1926, Graebner remarked on the universality of the suburban trend; one of "our Eastern 'down-town' congregations, numbering 600 communicants," he reported, "has only 60 members living within the city limits; 540 live in the suburbs."[3]

When Pfotenhauer used "parsonage" instead of "church steeple" in his comment on the suburban movement, the president put his finger on an important effect of geographical assimilation. Once outside the shadow of the parsonage, the Missouri Synod Lutheran was also away from the close supervision of _Herr Pastor_, representative of immigrant culture as well as spiritual mentor. The move to the suburbs thus weakened the Lutheran mental as well as geographical ghetto.

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[1] F. C. Streufert, "'In the Service of My Lord'" (mimeographed memoir, n.p., n.d.), p. 25.

[2] _LW_, XXXV (1916), 194. When the Fort Wayne congregations set aside a Sunday afternoon for a city-wide every member canvass, it was noted that "Redeemer, our English church, did not adopt the plan of making a canvass of their membership in one afternoon, for the simple reason that the members of that church live scattered all over the entire length and breadth of the city." _LW_, XXXVI (1917), 87.

[3] _LW_, XLV, 337.

This was true even if the parsonage followed the constituency out of the city. Noted Harlan Paul Douglass in 1924, "it has become almost a proverb in St. Louis that one cannot carry the German language west of Grand Avenue."[1] Speaking of suburban churches in general, Douglass observed that

> their constituencies are broken up into so many small social groups that the church infrequently serves them all at once. Their pastors are generally not the oracles that they frequently become in the small town [or, Douglass could have added, in immigrant society]. . . . They find it hard to interpret the whole of life religiously because the group to which they minister knows so little of the major practical interests of the bulk of its membership and because their common community experience is so limited.[2]

As members moved out of the city, they frequently transferred their membership, thus weakening the downtown churches which had been outstanding in size and strength in the Missouri Synod. Congregations might find themselves burdened with facilities--and indebtedness--out of proportion to their reduced rolls and circumstances.[3] Recognizing this, some pastors apparently went to great lengths to hold their suburban members to the city church. In doing so, the clergy spent time the mission critics thought should be better employed in true mission work within the original parish boundaries.[1]

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[1] Grand was roughly the dividing line between city and suburb, or at least between white collar and blue collar residences. The St. Louis Church Survey (New York, 1924), p. 109.

[2] The Suburban Trend, p. 208.

[3] This was just as true in the rural congregations, and probably more serious in the country because of more limited financial strength. See LW, XLV (1926), 337.

Many congregations, however, decided to move completely out of the old neighborhood and relocate on property in the suburbs. The classic report of such a relocation came from Nazareth Church in Philadelphia. The congregation there "felt constrained to do what a number of other congregations in practically all the larger cities have done in recent years--move out of the neighborhood into another section. For many years the congregation had worshipped in the old church near the Delaware River. Because of the heavy influx of all races of foreigners the location became very undesirable."[2]

The absence of protests against this desertion of downtown parishes for more bucolic surroundings illustrated the limitations of the mission critics' thought. A fair share of their polemic did, however, attack the complacency of well established urban parishes. Lindemann and Maier, especially, expressed their concern over the smugness and deliberate isolation attached to the conviction that the Missouri Synod taught no error. "Cold emphasis of orthodoxy will not help the unchurched myriads of our fellow-Americans," stated Maier.[3]

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[1] LW, XXXIX (1920), 300, quoting E. T. Lams in the Chicago City Missionary. Only a few scattered copies of this Chicago paper have been preserved.

[2] LW, XLVII (1928), 337.

[3] WLM, XXXIV (1925), 123. See also WLM, XXXV (1927), 444; XXXVIII (1929), 73; XXXVIII (1930), 320; AL, VIII (1925), 114, 120.

In this attack editors Lindemann and Maier were willing to go further than Graebner. When Lindemann described the complacent message, it sounded much like many of the Lutheran Witness columns: "Sermons are often preached which inevitably leave the impression that the Christian's life is solely defensive, that he is to live as much as possible in seclusion."[1] Statements like these presaged serious theological controversies that were to rage in the Thirties and Forties, after the acculturation process was more complete. In these controversies the critics were generally to be found on the side which their opponents labeled liberal.

Yet explicit encouragement to stay downtown even when the population changed was voiced only a few times. F. J. Lankenau was bluntest in 1926. "When a 'downtown' church moves 'up-town' leaving the 'down-town' problems unsolved behind," he asked, "who is to solve them?" The people moving into vacated parishes also need the Gospel, Lankenau reminded Lutherans. "Yet the churches have gathered their skirts about them and passed by on the other side."[2]

Writing in the Walther League Messenger, F. R. Webber used fiction to make the same point. In a serialized story, "Saint Martins on the Heights," Webber outlined the history of old "Evangelical Lutheran Martini Church," located in a city. "The thrifty members of the congregation had prospered and a number of them had become quite well-to-do in the prosperity that came with the World War. As they moved out to the Heights ['a fashionable new section'], the old neighborhood changed. The more prosperous Slovak families of the city, Transylvanians, Magyars, East Prussians, and Austrians moved into the old . . . section, crowding out the older German families and the sprinkling of Scandinavians." Martini Church's pastor, however, worked faithfully among the newcomers. "Every year he confirmed large classes of grown people, among whom were not only such new names as Cunningham, Brewster, Patterson, McClimans, Gallagher, but even such names as Kekic, Pelaj, Rosetko, Karabek, Karasiewicz and Czewitzski."

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[1] AL, VIII (1925), 114. See also AL, III (1920), 101; X (1927), 27; WLM, XXXVI (1928), 656; XXXVIII (1930), 644.

[2] LP, XLVIII (1926), 140. See also LW, XXXIX (1920), 300; DL, LXXXII (1926), 425-27.

Some older members grumbled, however, "declaring that the pastor was filling up their church with foreigners." They moved the church to a new location in the Heights and renamed it "The Church of Saint Martin's-on-the-Heights, Evangelical Lutheran." ("The fact that the rich and very fashionable Episcopal congregation known as 'Saint George's-on-the-Heights' was located in the next block may have had something to do with it.")[1]

After a number of episodes in which ambitious members of the church seek to retire the pastor as old fashioned,

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[1] WLM, XXXIV (1925), 25.

Webber resolved the situation by the deus ex machina of a mine cave-in beneath the Heights. The new church is badly damaged by the shifting soil and the congregation resolves to return to its old neighborhood and mission work there.[1]

The only extended report of an actual church which stuck to its original parish came in the Lutheraner. Pastor E. F. Engelbert reported that Martini congregation in Baltimore had faced the common downtown dilemma by beginning a Sunday school. A seminary student was obtained to help locate prospects. As the Sunday school expanded, it provided entry into many unchurched homes, and the church itself slowly began to grow again. Wrote Engelbert, "if one looks at the membership lists of many old congregations, one reads almost exclusively German names. Zealous mission work in the large cities would soon change that. The Mcs and Macs may and should also go to heaven. Among our [Sunday school] students are all possible nationalities; one is even Chinese."[2]

Engelbert recommended that district mission treasuries subsidize downtown congregations too weak to carry on such a program. "The district mission budget often carries little mission congregations for decades with all kinds of patience, congregations in which the missionary comes in contact with few unchurched. I venture to say that in this [city] work, the missionary meets more unchurched in a week than the missionary of a little mission congregation meets in a whole year."[1]

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[1] XXXIV (1925-26), 25, 98, 156, 220, 282, 348, 412, 476, 540, 602.

[2] In urging other city congregations to inaugurate similar efforts, Engelbert encouraged them not to shrink "before the thought that one would fill the church with dirty, bug-infested children. We have not had any such experience," Engelbert assured his readers. "Should an unkempt, untidy child come once, as a rule one warning is enough. The children soon notice that their fellow students are clean. Children of really poor parents who have no proper clothes receive such free."

The Baltimore example, however, was rarely followed by other Missouri Synod congregations. Perhaps it was expecting too much of a group only recently moved up the social scale itself to sponsor aggressive mission activity in the very area it was escaping.[2] Missions in the suburbs were more to be expected, and were, in fact, the primary thrust of the mission critics' statements regarding geographical redistribution of mission effort.

4

The first extended, post-war call for more suburban missions came from John H. C. Fritz in his pioneering little manual, The Practical Missionary.[1] At the time the pastor of a large church in St. Louis, Fritz became one of the most important critics in the period 1917-1929. He was born in 1874 in Ohio to a Lutheran--though not Missouri Synod--pastor, and completed his schooling at Concordia Seminary in 1897. At the seminary he joined Theodore Graebner, F. P. Wilhelm, and a few other students preparing themselves especially for work in English. After a brief pastorate in Missouri, he became the first English-speaking Missouri Synod missionary in New York City. In 1914 he accepted a call to a congregation in St. Louis where he began a rapid rise in Synodical officialdom. He served as president of the important Western District until his acceptance in 1920 of the newly created post of dean at the St. Louis seminary.[2]

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[1] DL, LXXXIII (1927), 318-319.

[2] What was confusingly termed "city missions" did receive more attention during the Twenties, but the pastors in this activity acted chiefly as chaplains for urban charity and medical institutions. Additional semantic problems stem from the critics' use of "city" missions to differentiate from rural missions, as conducted by the Reiseprediger. The context usually indicated that the critics were thinking of suburban, rather than downtown missions. Occasionally, proof to the contrary lacking, suburban has to be assumed.

A large man with a square jaw and brusque manner, Fritz was engaged in a surprising number of activities and movements during the course of his career, but he usually remained in the background. Since he held no editorial chair, he did not have the same continuous outlet for his views as did others of the critics. Nevertheless, his sentiments were clear from his actions and from what statements he did make.

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[1] (CPH, 1919). The book was written during a period of enforced inactivity due to the 1918 influenza epidemic. Interview, Ruth F. Meyer.

[2] Frequently between 1920 and 1929 he was placed on the slate of Synodical vice presidential candidates, and was not elected only because he withdrew. LW, XXXIX (1920), 212-213; Daily Record of Proceedings, June 12, 1926, 2; DL, LXXXV (1929), 229, 231. For Fritz's life and work see Ruth F. Meyer, "'A Man Sent From God,'" CHIQ, XXXV (April 1962), 6-15; Martin Walker, "Recollections of John H. C. Fritz, D.D.," CHIQ, XXVII (July 1954), 49-56.

In The Practical Missionary, Fritz devoted an early chapter to the current expansion of the cities: "sparsely populated sections are being built up and the fields near the city limits turned into city blocks and beautiful residential districts."[1] He emphasized that "our church ought to establish itself in such new sections as soon as they are being peopled, when a good choice of a location can still be made, real estate purchased at a comparatively low figure, and the new field has not yet been covered by other churches."[2]

Though such proposals were novel in many Missouri Synod circles, Fritz was fairly discreet in his presentation. By contrast, Walter A. Maier launched a frontal attack on the Reiseprediger tradition. "We wonder why we have passed large centers of population to send missionaries into sparsely settled country, miles beyond the railroad. Why . . . the field of activity of some missionaries cannot be located on the government maps, while great industrial and cultural centers . . . as Wilmington, Atlanta, Cambridge, Fall River, New Bedford, Nashville, Syracuse, remain untouched."[3]

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[1] P. 13.

[2] P. 14. Fritz's book stimulated formal discussion in at least the Oregon and Washington District convention. LW, XXXVIII (1919), 343.

[3] AL, V (1922), 115-116.

As editor of the Messenger Maier twice devoted the cover of his magazine to a picture of New York City and a caption calling for greater activity there.[1] He also focused on missionary opportunities resulting from the Florida land boom.[2] To call attention to southern California, he printed reports from missionaries there: "Our Los Angeles pastors breathe hard when they read of missionaries being sent to some little town of a thousand people and four churches when they can point to districts with thousands of people and no churches."[3]

Maier was certainly not the only one calling for more urban missions during the Twenties, simply one of the most quotable. The Witness, American Lutheran, and others all preached on the same text.[4] By the late Twenties, even Ludwig Fuerbringer was making uncharacteristically outspoken comments in the Lutheraner.[5] Fuerbringer did not write crusading editorials like those of Maier or Graebner, but he treated missions in long excursus which appeared without warning in rambling travelogues of the editor's trips to district conventions.

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[1] XXXII (1923), 129; XXXVI (1928), 593.

[2] XXXIV (1926), 404.

[3] XXXVIII (1928), 84. For further references to city missions in WLM, see XXXIII (1926), 328; XXXVII (1928), 13, 148.

[4] AL, VII (1924), 35, 120, 138; IX (1926), 52; LW, XLV (1926), 337; XLVI (1927), 174; Graebner to L. Sieck, Jan. 17, 1928, TG 24; Lankenau, pp. 217-239; Gieseler, p. 43.

[5] For Fuerbringer's earlier, usually brief and mildly worded allusions to city missions, see DL, LXXVII (1921), 73; LXXIX (1923), 207; LXXX (1924), 201. For Fuerbringer's private views, however, see "Memorandum on Home Missions" (Graebner-Fuerbringer conversation, Sept. 3, 1924, on missions in Ontario), TG 86.

In 1926 the editor visited New York. That fall Lutheraner subscribers read detailed descriptions of the rapidity with which large sections of Long Island were being settled. The editor echoed Fritz's earlier stress on the necessity for moving into such areas quickly and flexibly.[1] In 1929, after visiting the Manitoba-Saskatchewan District, the heart of Reiseprediger country, Fuerbringer informed his readers that the Synod's task was no longer in the country, but in cities and suburbs.[2]

Fuerbringer was not saying anything not being said by Maier, Lindemann, Graebner, and others. The point was that this was being said in the Lutheraner. Since the 1850's the paper had reported the travels of missionaries seeking out German Lutheran settlers on the frontier. Now it printed a picture of Manhattan with the caption, "A view of the midpoint of the greatest mission field of our Synod: New York."[3]

The critics' drive for more missions in the suburbs quickly involved them in both financial and educative matters. The Synod soon found that missions in the cities and suburbs were more expensive to build than those in rural areas. Land and labor were more expensive and a structure more elaborate than a rude frame building was required.[1] Without the ethnic and linguistic ties enjoyed by the Reiseprediger, the suburban missionary had trouble attracting people to services held in a store, a home, or a basement church. The missionary was caught in a vicious circle: to win converts he needed a church building; to afford a building he had to win converts.

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[1] DL, LXXXII, 346, 394, 425-427.

[2] DL, LXXXV, 186. See also LXXXIV (1928), 156.

[3] LXXXI (1925), 206. For other Lutheraner references, see LXXXI (1925), 205-206; LXXXIII (1927), 367-68.

To assist young congregations secure a church home, the Synod turned to an agency constructed along lines similar to those of American denominations. A Church Extension Fund, to make interest-free loans to congregations, had been casually established in 1902, but did not become significant until 1917.[2] In that year a quadricentennial collection of some $340,000 was earmarked for the fund. Between 1917 and 1920, 136 congregations were loaned money--more than in the previous fifteen years.[3] Requests for loans steadily increased especially as more work was undertaken in urban areas. The amounts requested also rose. Up to 1917 the loans averaged $500. In 1917 they jumped to $2,700. By

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[1] Other denominations found city missions even more expensive than foreign missions--leading a wag to suggest in the American Mercury that denominations could economize on American evangelism by moving the cities to Africa. Quoted in LW, LXVII (1928), 4.

[2] Total capital in the fund in 1911 was under $5,000. The Walther League then collected $40,000 for this purpose. Ein., 1920, 152.

[3] SYB, 1918, 110. Ein., 1920, 152.

1926 the average congregation was borrowing $6,200.[1] In 1920 the mission critics enthusiastically supported the transfer to the Church Extension Fund of the unexpended balance ($300,000) collected by the Board for Army and Navy.[2]

At mid-decade, after studying suburbs all over the country, H. P. Douglass concluded, "there is a narrower range of denominations; hence the constituencies of existing churches are more mixed, and there is a higher proportion of people unchurched because the suburb does not furnish them with the exact church of their preference."[3] To reach such unaffiliated people, a Missouri Synod pastor could not walk through town listening for German. Fritz's Practical Missionary was the first effort to educate the suburban missionary in reconnaissance methods different from those of the Reiseprediger. Fritz gave elementary and detailed instructions about conducting house to house canvasses and publicity campaigns. At the 1920 meeting of the Synodical mission boards, it was resolved that the seminary should inaugurate a course in missionary methods, to be taught preferably by someone with current experience rather than by a seminary professor.[4] The Synodical convention of the same year gave binding force to such a suggestion by passing a similar resolution.[1] For pastors already out in the field, the American Lutheran provided practical instruction throughout the Twenties.[2]

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[1] Pro., 1926, 128.

[2] "Protokoll," pp. 3-4; Ver., 1920, 116.

[3] Suburban Trend, p. 206.

[4] "Protokoll," p. 9. Such courses had been urged by the English District as early as 1916. English District Pro., 1916, 69.

The result of these efforts by the critics was a missionary much better trained and readier to use English. For maximum results, however, he had to be properly located and supported. To this, also, the reform group turned its attention.

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In 1918, while the Atlantic District was spending seventy-eight cents per communicant member on home missions, only ten cents was being spent in the Northern Illinois District. Rather than an overall policy decision, however, the difference reflected chiefly the aggressiveness of the Atlantic District. At that time every district in the Missouri Synod had its own, autonomous mission board, staffed generally by part time officials, which determined its own needs and administered all home mission work within its area.

A Synodical home mission board, of only three part time officials, was established in 1911. Advisory in character, its chief function was as clearing house for Synodical subsidies to districts with more opportunities (or more eloquence) than resources. The districts did not even necessarily include the Synod's mission board in their budgets. Apparently the Synodical board itself did not dispense the Synodical subsidies, and its own budget was of such proportions that in 1923 it petitioned the Board of Directors for permission to forgo the annual audit, "inasmuch as they handle no money."[1]

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[1] LW, XXXIX (1920), 213.

[2] This subject, and the American Lutheran's place in it is discussed in more detail in Chapter VI.

The major decisions regarding allocations of men and money were left up to the district boards even though none had much idea of its needs relative to those of other districts. For instance, the assignment of newly graduated men to the field was done by "striking, say, one-third of all calls reported by all districts, because . . . [the Synod was] one-third short the number of candidates,--very little, in some cases no attention being paid to the fact that one district might strike all its calls and another retain all, according to the relative importance of the field and the measure of aid which it has received in the past."[2]

The resulting chaos on the Synodical level furnished endless grist for the critics' mill. Along with more English-language missions and greater efforts in the suburbs, the rationalization of Synodical administration was an integral part of the critics' mission program. "Whoever has heard anything about the Allgemeine Innere Mission [Board for Home Missions] except when the treasury was empty," fumed the Witness editor in 1919. "We must get away from the idea that men can attend to the business of a huge body as a little side line, between pipes or while sitting in a streetcar."[1]

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[1] BdD. Min., 231101C.

[2] Graebner to F. Wilhelm, 1921, quoted in Graebner to P. Prokopy, May 13, 1933, TG 86.

On the district level, though, the situation was being remedied even before the critics had unlimbered their big guns. Six districts in 1918 and 1919 either resolved to call or reported installing a full time mission director.[2] In fact, the first formal proposal to improve Synodical home mission administration came not from the critics, but from the Minnesota District home mission board in a memorial presented to the 1920 triennial convention. The Minnesota board did not hesitate to name the current problems in home mission administration: great inequalities in the pay of missionaries, lack of cooperation between districts in gathering funds, inefficient shifting about of missionaries, and the absence of systematic investigation of potential missionary fields.[3]

To solve such difficulties the Minnesota board proposed adding to the Synodical mission board representatives from each district, the augmented group to meet once a year with authority eventually to call a secretary of home missions. In a lengthy postscript the Minnesota pastors called for more missions in public institutions and in cities, and for better education in missionary methods. The board emphasized that it was time to change tactics and seek out mission fields instead of accepting only those which presented themselves; a church that was not imperialistic was a stagnating one.[1]

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[1] Graebner to Doege, Dec. 13, 1919, TG 61.

[2] Atlantic (DL, LXXIV [1918], 177), English (English District Pro., 1919, 62), Manitoba-Saskatchewan (DL, LXXV [1919], 216), North Wisconsin (DL, LXXV [1919], 279), Oregon-Washington (DL, LXXIV [1918], 256), and Western (DL, LXXV [1919], 370).

[3] Ein., 1920, 60-62. See also AL, IV (1921), 100.

The Minnesota memorial summed up the most important points of the reform party's program, and did so even before the American Lutheran or the Messenger began to concentrate heavy fire on the Synod's mission policy.[2] But, whatever its source, the memorial was promptly adopted by the reform party. In the months preceding the 1920 convention, Theodore Graebner, for example, wrote more than forty letters to pastors all over the country, urging them to write in favor of the Minnesota memorial to the chairman of the convention committee which would report on it during the sessions.[3]

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[1] Ein., 1920, 60-62.

[2] Apparently, none of the editorial triumvirate had any significant role in the drafting of the district board's proposal. This fact should serve as a warning against too ready identification of the movement with its most vocal leaders. To make the critics the generals, strategists, and the whole of the army besides would be as extravagant as to deny them credit entirely.

[3] See letters, Jan.-June, 1920, TG 61.

At a meeting of district mission board representatives preceding the 1920 triennial convention, the Minnesota proposal was thoroughly explained to win support from this interested group. In the general discussion that followed, though, it quickly became apparent that many of the district boards were quite satisfied with the way missionary activities were being conducted in their areas. In fact, only after a long debate was it resolved to recommend that districts consider hiring full time district mission directors. On the Minnesota plan, the meeting finally produced a compromise recommendation to the convention committee considering missionary affairs. Though the Board for Home Missions was expanded from three to five members, the meeting balked at a full time Synodical mission director. The enlarged board, however, was instructed to keep closer watch on mission business. Partly for this purpose, a meeting of representatives from the various mission boards within the Synod was to become an annual affair.[1] The convention committee for missions accepted most of the meeting's recommendations and the convention itself acted accordingly. The Synod also requested the districts to include an allocation for the Synodical mission board in their budgets.[2]

An important factor in the defeat of the Minnesota plan was implicit in the opening sentence of the district mission boards' recommendation: "The administration of home missions should remain in the future, as in the past, the business of the individual districts."[1] Except in matters of higher education and foreign missions, the districts had traditionally been fairly autonomous within a decentralized synod. Intrenched district mission boards were yet unready to surrender authority to a centralized office.

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[1] "Protokoll," pp. 1-3.

[2] Pro., 1920, 50-51.

The critics, however, took their defeat as only temporary. They encouraged the Minnesota board to present a similar proposal at the next triennial convention,[2] and began a campaign to insure its passage there. The main effort was inaugurated by the 1922 American Lutheran October home mission issue, and continued until the convention the following summer. In the lead article of the October issue, "Wanted--A Missionary Policy," Graebner described the need for a clearing house of information upon which rational judgments could be based. Without it, he said, there was no way of checking whether a district was over-estimating, or as he thought more common, under-estimating, the mission potential in its area. In the same issue, F. R. Webber presented a detailed sketch for a rationalized mission administration, and Paul Lindemann came out strongly for more district mission field secretaries.[3]

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[1] "Protokoll," p. 3.

[2] H. F. Bouman to Graebner, Nov. 26, 1922, TG 2; Mar. 8, 1923, TG 69.

[3] V, 119, 121, 113.

In April, 1923, Graebner offered Lindemann another article, this one on the possible overhead expenses involved in the proposed institution of a new home mission policy.[1] The result was "Wanted--More Overhead," one of the strongest articles in the Twenties calling for more administrative staff. The author stated flatly that mission work and fund raising were stagnating, and attributed the poor state of home missions directly to the dearth of full time officials. No religious body, he said, could hope to move forward with only four full-time officials for six hundred thousand communicants.[2]

Letters again went out to pastors asking their support for the Minnesota memorial.[3] Paul Lindemann had the memorial translated, presented, and adopted at a Chicago English conference.[4] At the Synodical convention in 1923 the memorial again appeared under the sponsorship of the Minnesota mission board, but this time endorsed also by the Chicago English Lutheran Conference, by the Minneapolis Church of the Redeemer (of which Lindemann was pastor), by the Lake Erie Conference of the English District, and by the New Jersey pastoral conference. In addition, the 1922

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[1] Graebner to Lindemann, April 3, 1923, TG 69. Lindemann to Graebner, April 11, 1923, TG 67.

[2] AL, VI (1923), 65-67.

[3] See Graebner to Kleinhans, June 7, 1923, TG 86; Graebner to F. P. Wilhelm, Mar. 28, 1923; April 3, 1923, TG 69.

[4] Lindemann to Graebner, April 11, 1923, TG 67.

American Lutheran home mission number was specifically cited.[1]

In the considerably expanded 1923 memorial the board rehearsed again the difficulties and failures in mission work, speaking especially of the problems caused by uncoordinated surveys and fund raising. Noted the board, "a large, heavy battering ram, held and swung in union, brings down the fortress wall more quickly than a number of smaller beams used singly."[2] Believing the work of home missions too large for supervision by one man, the Minnesota board now called for the establishment of a commission, to include three full time mission directors, each in charge of a number of districts. Each director was to be an ex officio member of the district mission boards in his area. He was to see to it that necessary publicity and fund raising were taken care of, and that new fields, especially in the cities, were surveyed and entered.

"The committee which reported on Home Mission affairs was impervious from the neck up to any appeals for a missionary policy," reported Graebner to a friend after the convention. "If I had spoken choc taw [sic] I would have produced as much effect."[3] The convention had been satisfied to recommend that all districts establish the office of a superintendent of missions.[4]

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[1] Ein., 1923, 95-102.

[2] Ein., 1923, 97.

[3] Graebner to T. Strieter, Dec. 18, 1924; see also Graebner to P. Prokopy, May 13, 1933, TG 86.

[4] Pro., 1923, 32.

While the reform group did not give up after this defeat, its main arguments had been presented and the major articles thereafter by Lindemann were essentially extended recapitulations of familiar points.[1] The critics did, however, get a measure of support before the 1926 convention from Synodical financial secretary Theodore Eckhart. Eckhart proposed that the Board of Directors sponsor a memorial calling for the organization of a department of missions with a full time director. The board rejected Eckhart's suggestion and thereby indicated the fate of the Minnesota plan.[2] At the convention, the delegates voted to refer the proposal to the districts and congregations for study and recommendations.

Whether this action was sincere or not, it effectively killed the resolution.[3] An advisory committee to the financial office[4] tried vainly to resurrect the proposal in 1928 by suggesting a mission director to the Board of Directors. The committee argued that without such a man, the financial office could not get information needed for an equitable distribution of funds. The directors referred the matter to the next fiscal conference, where no action was taken.[1] At the 1929 convention only a single congregation submitted recommendations regarding a mission director. It received scant consideration on the convention floor.[2]

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[1] AL, VII (1924), 114; VIII (1925), 125. Graebner was by this time immersed in work connected with the building of Concordia Seminary.

[2] BdD Min., 260409B.

[3] Pro., 1926, 90-92.

[4] J. H. C. Fritz, F. J. Lankenau, and W. F. Wilk--all members of the reform group. BdD Min., 260630L.

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With their program consistently voted down, the critics of the Missouri Synod's mission policy seemed a remarkably ineffectual lobby. Yet, the yearly mission conference inaugurated at the 1920 convention gave the critics an annual rostrum before an important group. Already in 1920, F. P. Wilhelm presented a paper on the new methods necessary. Similar papers were assigned for the following year.[3] By 1924 the conference established a central committee on publicity and lectures to prepare and distribute stereopticon slides with accompanying lectures.[4]

In spirit, if not in exact program, the conference gradually moved toward the critics. At the 1925 session, the conference decided to recommend that the Synod make the

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[1] BdD Min., 280514L; Min., Fiscal Conference, May 16-17, 1928, p. 6, L. Meyer Papers, B 46.

[2] Pro., 1929, 129.

[3] "Protokoll," pp. 6-8; LW, XL (1921), 346-47.

[4] DL, LXXXI (1925), 253; BdD Min., 240910AA. After a publicity director was added to the financial office of the Synod in 1926, this committee turned over its activities to the Synodical office. Theo. Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Feb. 24, 1927. By 1928, 56 sets of slides on six missions were in stock. "Calendar of Topics," n.d. [Nov. 1928], bound with BdD Min., Dec., 1928.

1926-29 triennium one of home mission effort, as the 1923-26 period had been primarily concerned with higher education.[1] A "Forward Movement for Missions" was urged at the 1926 Synodical convention.[2] Memorials particularly stressed the need for a larger Church Extension Fund. The board managing the fund requested a full time executive director and a drive for five million dollars. The convention, however, was unenthusiastic about the slogan as well as the financial drive. The mission triennium idea received little support, the Church Extension Fund was refused an executive secretary, and its goal dropped to a million and a half dollars.[3]

The 1926-29 triennium did see more regular attention to missions in the Witness and Lutheraner.[4] However, financially, the effort was an unqualified failure. Instead of $1,500,000, the Church Extension Fund received less than $300,000.[5] Furthermore, the fund was tapped by the Synod itself for interest-free capital to cover Synodical deficits.

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[1] DL, LXXXI (1925), 286, 351.

[2] Ver., 1926, 153.

[3] Ver., 1926, 214-220. After the convention Fuerbringer openly criticized its decision in the Lutheraner--something unusual in a Synodical organ. LXXXII (1926), 294.

[4] See LW, XLV (1926), 337-43; DL, LXXXII (1926), 370-77; and regular mission features in both papers in 1927 and following.

[5] Ein., 1929, 95. The failure was a double blow, for the Synodical effort was to have taken the place of a number of local campaigns for district funds planned in 1926. Ein., 1926, 190; 1929, 198.

By 1929 the Synod owed its Church Extension Fund $280,000, nearly a quarter of the fund's total assets.[1] The result was to hold the fund's effective worth to 1926 levels.[2]

In spite of such setbacks the mission conference continued in the late Twenties to press in the direction advocated by the critics. By the late Twenties, too, additional pressure for a rationalization of administration came from the Synod's colleges and seminaries. With burgeoning enrollments, the St. Louis seminary was beginning to graduate a steadily increasing number of pastors. However, the number of calls for these graduates was falling. Little projection of trends was needed to anticipate a disastrous oversupply of ministers in the near future. (See Figure 9.) The solution, according to the mission conference and the critics, was for the rural, subsidized districts to become self-supporting. At its 1927 meeting the mission conference took notice of the numerous subsidized mission stations which showed little promise of growth. Said the conference, "the proper thing to do is to place one missionary in charge of a number of such places. If necessary, such places must be satisfied with an occasional service, even though the service be held during the week."[3]

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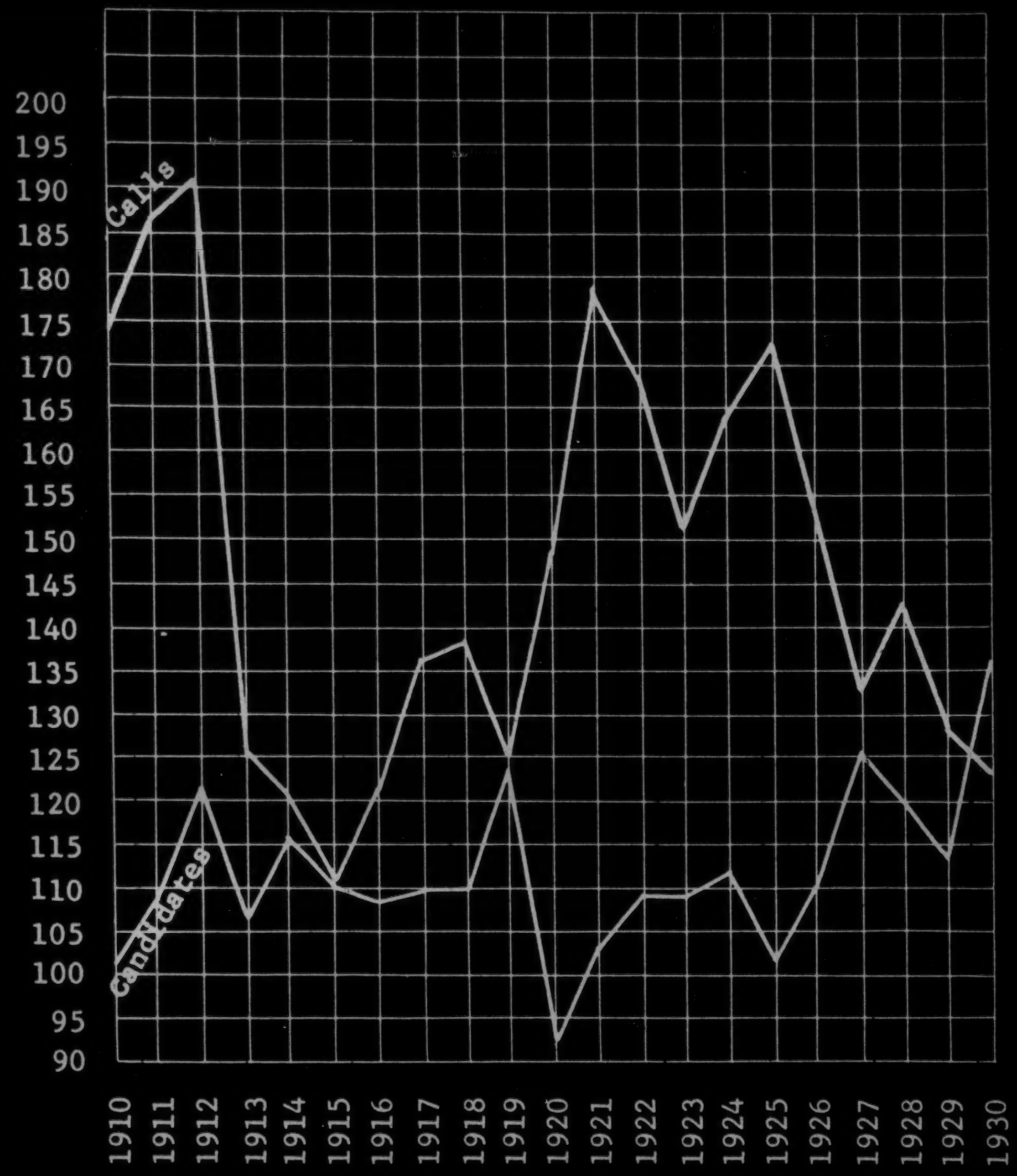
[1] DL, LXXXV (1929), 94-96; SYB, 1929, 180. In view of the overwhelming number of requests for loans from small congregations, it is strange that the borrowing by the Synod was not publicly debated.

[2] LW, XLVI (1927), 353.

[3] LW, XLVI (1927), 353. See also Fritz in LW, XLVII (1928), 281.

FIGURE 9

NUMBER OF CALLS AND CANDIDATES, 1910-1930[1]



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[1] 1910-1923 compiled by Ernst Eckhardt in LW, XLIII (1924), 247. 1924-1930 compiled from yearly reports in LW.

In 1927 eight districts were receiving major subsidies from the Synod. Two of these, the California-Nevada and the Southern (southeastern U. S.), contained many urban and suburban areas. The other six received three quarters of the 1927 Synodical home mission budget.[1] But these six, with a baptized membership which was only 7% of the Synod's total, accounted for 35% of all congregations with a baptized membership under fifty adults and children.[2] The pastor-communicant member ratio in these districts was the lowest in the Synod, and more important, had not been significantly changed since 1917.[3]

Ludwig Fuerbringer bluntly told Lutheraner readers that many of the older districts which were supporting missions in the northwestern districts actually had more mission opportunities within their own borders. Many pastors, he said, had hardly enough to do unless they taught parochial school.[4] Graebner wrote privately that "in sheer desperation missionaries beg for calls as they have 'nothing to do.' Others teach their wives Hebrew so as to while away the weeks and months."[1]

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[1] Alberta-British Columbia, Colorado, Manitoba-Saskatchewan, North Dakota-Montana, Oregon-Washington, and Texas.

[2] Calculated from a 1927 chart of congregational size (SYB, 151); such a tabulation was compiled only at infrequent intervals.

[3] Calculated from statistics in SYB, 1917 and 1929.

[4] DL, LXXXV (1929), 186.

In 1929, the Board for Home Missions reported to the triennial convention that the Synod's slow growth was because "the majority of our missionaries . . . are working in rural districts, which are heavily losing their population to the large industrial centers of our country. In view of this fact, consolidation of small mission-congregations and parishes has been repeatedly advocated. But the District mission boards assure us that this has been done wherever possible and cannot be continued on a still larger scale without jeopardizing the immortal souls intrusted to their care."[2]

Although the board's arguments did not sway the 1929 convention, important progress was made when the Synod's Board of Directors organized its committees after the 1929 triennial elections. At the suggestion of Theodore Eckhart, a new committee on missions was founded. Pastor Frank C. Streufert, newly-elected member of the board, was made chairman of this committee.[3] Streufert was a successful pastor in Chicago, active in suburban and foreign language missions.[4] During the war he served on the Board for Army and Navy, and thereafter in the Lutheran Laymen's League endowment fund drive. He edited the Lutheran Soldiers' and Sailors' Bulletin as well as the English organ of the Northern Illinois District.

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[1] Graebner to H. Daib, Jan. 16, 1929, TG 69. Such a situation was substantiated by Streufert (p. 2) after a survey of the Synod's missions between 1929 and 1932 (p. 60).

[2] _Ein._, 1929, 93.

[3] BdD Min., 290708L.

[4] See _LP_, XLVII (1925), 60-61.

Streufert soon embarked on a study of Synodical missions. His findings corroborated the opinions of the mission critics.[1] With such views represented at last on the Board of Directors, change was more assured. When the triennial convention met in 1932 it faced the additional persuasion of an actual surplus of ministerial candidates. A Synodical mission director was finally authorized and Streufert appointed to the post.[2]

The office was long overdue. In the period 1918 to 1929, the districts with the greatest urban mission opportunities were able to increase their percentage of the missionaries in the whole Synod by a scant five per cent.[3] By 1929 a quarter of the services in mission congregations were still conducted in the German language. A distressingly large number of these were not in the Northwestern immigrant centers, but were apparently in older congregations which had never become self-supporting.[1]

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[1] At the general mission conference in 1930 he read a paper restating arguments which could have appeared in early issues of the American Lutheran. LW, XLIX (1930), 338-339.

[2] Commented Graebner sarcastically, "a new idea in the Missouri Synod takes exactly 12 years to germinate, sprout and bear fruit--rather a long period of incubation. . . . If they had listened to us nine and twelve years ago we would not at the present time have this deplorable surplus of candidates. As it was we did our missionary work blindfolded, scattering our money and men where the noisiest demands were made. As a result we have hundreds of workers in stations that can never be self-sustaining." Graebner to E. F. Engelbert, June 28, 1932, TG 86.

[3] The districts were Atlantic, California-Nevada, Central, Eastern, English, Northern Illinois, and Western. Calculated from mission board reports, SYB, 1918 and 1929.

Nevertheless, important gains were made in missions during the Twenties. Although the Reiseprediger still journeyed about in the Northwest, he no longer necessarily limited his efforts to German immigrants.[2] Moreover the total number of missionaries increased from 661 in 1918 to 908 by the end of the decade.[3] If the Synod could not be persuaded to authorize a Synodical director of missions, at least more and more districts installed a district director.[4] Although mission budgets were consistently cut and appropriations not reached, at least much more money was available in 1929 than at the beginning of the decade. The total Synodical and district mission budget in 1918 was just above $300,000; by 1929 the figure was above $850,000.[5] And if it did not receive the attention it deserved, the Church Extension Fund still grew tremendously in the Twenties. After the war, the Synodical fund had assets of about $400,000; by the Depression, the combined district and Synodical funds boasted capital of $2,800,000.[1]

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[1] SYB, 1929, 163.

[2] DL, LXXXII (1926), 210, 341.

[3] SYB, 1918, 98; 1929, 166.

[4] LW, XLVI (1927), 302, 304; XLVII (1928), 209, 244, 290.

[5] SYB, 1918, 98; 1929, 165.

Furthermore, judging from the number of adults confirmed--presumably Americans rather than German-Lutheran immigrants--the effectiveness of Missouri's outreach steadily improved. Twenty-one hundred adults were confirmed in 1918, or one adult for every ten children confirmed in that year; in 1929, 5,700 adults were confirmed--one adult for every five children. Between 1909 and 1918, not more than 10,000 adults were reported confirmed; in the decade between 1919 and 1928, 43,235 were accepted into full membership.[2]

Most reassuringly, by 1927 the annual growth rate seemed finally to be recovering from its 1920 nadir. For the first time in two decades, the annual growth rate in 1928 and 1929 reached two percent. The increase in growth, however, was enjoyed almost exclusively by those congregations which used English in at least half of their worship services. Moreover, of the congregations which grew between 1926 and 1929, those using only English grew at nearly twice the rate of those using some German.[3]

The statistical growth was the final proof that the

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[1] SYB, 1929, 180.

[2] SYB, 1948, 145. Noting the phenomenon, Graebner remarked, "we do not remember to have witnessed a single such ceremony in our youth." LW, XLI (1922), 70.

[3] Generalizations made on the basis of statistics compiled in the SYB beginning in 1926 regarding gains and losses of congregations classified by language each used in services. SYB, 1926, 148; 1927, 154; 1928, 152; 1929, 150.

Missouri Synod had crossed the subtle line between an immigrant sect and a denomination immigrant only in origin, with foreign-born in its constituency. The growth of the Synod did not yet demonstrate any radical change in ethnic character. That was to come later. But the statistics did reflect the broadened missionary horizons indispensable for successful assimilation.

In 1916 the president of the English District told his district convention that the German districts--in other words, the rest of the Synod--had as their chief problem the transition to English. By 1927 the English District was told that "the days of the pioneer work of preaching God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure in the language of our country are passed. The trail has been blazed. The open country lies before us."[1]

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[1] J. Adam Detzer, "President's Address and Report," English District *Pro.*, 1916, 43; G. Schuessler, "Address of the President," *ibid.*, 1927, 8.

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE HOUSETOPS

A successful transition of missionary orientation from the German diaspora to Americans involved much more than using English instead of German. It included a rationalization of administration and a shift from concentration on immigrants in the country to Americans in the city. In addition, the shift in missions, and, equally important, progressive assimilation, involved the Missouri Synod in a number of techniques and activities which may be grouped under a broad definition of denominational advertising.

The Twenties was preeminently a decade of ballyhoo. Spurred by techniques of propaganda developed during the war, and by the booming post war economy with new emphasis on leisure time activities, the advertising man and press agent came into their own. Between 1909 and 1929, periodical advertising rose from 54 million dollars to 320 million. In the same period advertising in newspapers increased from 149 million dollars to 792 million.[1] An estimated total of a billion and a half dollars was spent on advertising in

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[1] President's Research Committee on Social Trends, Recent Social Trends in the United States (Washington, 1933), p. 871.

1927 alone.[1]

Influenced by the successful liberty loan campaigns, advertisers compressed publicity activities into "drives" on special days or weeks. At mid-decade the Lynds counted more than forty such campaigns in one year at Middletown.[2] Institutions which had previously not considered formal publicity now turned to advertising. By 1927, for instance, more than a hundred cities in the United States were advertising their advantages at an estimated annual cost of ten million dollars.[3]

The American churches, as well, were too integrated into American life to resist this new development. Preachers were quick to adopt the ad-writer's slogans. One of the drives noted by the Lynds in Middletown was a curiosity known as "Go to Church Sunday." A sermon on the Trinity could be entitled after an oil advertisement, "Three-in-One Oil"; one on conversion after a soap ad, "Eventually, Why Not Now?"[4] Advertising men, in turn, looked to the Bible for precedents. An insurance company pointed to Moses as "one of the greatest salesmen and real-estate promoters that ever lived."[1] According to Bruce Barton, Christ Himself was the greatest advertiser. In his best seller, The Man Nobody Knows, Barton assured his readers that Christ "would be a national advertiser today."[2] Jesus had managed to master basic advertising principles: terseness, simplicity, sincerity, and repetition. Working on these principles, Christ produced the parable of the Good Samaritan, "the greatest advertisement of all time."[3]

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[1] Preston W. Slosson, The Great Crusade and Thereafter, 1914-1928 (New York, 1930), p. 363.

[2] Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd, Middletown (New York, 1929), p. 491.

[3] Slosson, p. 370.

[4] Quoted in William E. Leuchtenberg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932 (Chicago, 1958), p. 189.

Such near-blasphemy was doubly distasteful to many Missouri Synod Lutherans with their European state church tradition and hesitation about American ways. A common reaction was that of A. J. Klindworth, expressed in the Ohio Synod's Lutheran Standard and reprinted in the Lutheran Witness.

> From all sides voices are heard that the Lutheran Church has hid itself under a bushel-basket, and it is high time that it gracefully and manfully come out from under it and step into the lime-light on the world's stage. A big band is organized . . . to sound the praise of the great Lutheran Church in the big dailies, and even the second fiddles are to be heard in the village weeklies. How does that harmonize with Christ's way? He did great things but never boasted of them. The servant is not above his master. The Church should never rise above Christ. . . . Don't sound your own horn. The time and energy wasted in doing this can be more profitably employed.[4]

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[1] Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday (New York, 1931), p. 127. For a quick review of business and religion, see also William Doherty, "The Impact of Business on Protestantism, 1900-1929," Business History Review, XXVIII (June 1954), 141-153.

[2] (New York, 1924), p. 140.

[3] P. 143.

[4] LW, XXXVIII (1919), 245.

The more Americanized wing of the Synod recognized as valid the fear that the "adoption of methods of publicity might turn into an aping of the methods of sensational pseudo-religionists and might lead to the sacrifice of certain principles of Lutheranism." But, wrote Paul Lindemann, "it is this very difference with the distorters of Scripture that the Lutheran Church desires to advertise."[1] Undeniably, Christians had an evangelical imperative to spread the Gospel. To apply this injunction to advertising, H. P. Eckhardt, English District pastor and Synodical vice-president, constructed the following syllogism: the mission of the church is to save souls--American souls included. One of the most efficient ways of spreading the Gospel is to advertise. Therefore, publicity is the duty of the church.[2]

As in other aspects of Synodical development, the war gave the reform party a powerful argument. Paul Lindemann could point out with perfect justice that in localities "where during the past ten years the Lutheran churches have employed dignified and persistent publicity methods, Lutheranism has been free from . . . insidious aspersions."[3]

Had the war continued and the value of the Synodical War-Time Bureau become more apparent, possibly this office might have evolved into a public relations agency.[1] Without war pressure, however, Synodical officials, strongly attached to the German and to a limited conception of Synodical powers, were hardly likely to inaugurate an aggressive advertising program. In the absence of official initiative, independent groups and individuals had to assume the responsibility for public relations. By doing so they simultaneously laid the foundations for important Synodical institutions and demonstrated the degree of German-Lutheran acceptance of American culture.

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[1] AL, IV (1921), 134.

[2] AL, I, 1 (1918), 3.

[3] AL, I, 7 (1918), 2.

Several groups were established to bring the Missouri Synod before the American people, and the American people before the Missouri Synod. The oldest and most influential body was the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau in New York City. The ALPB, as it was (almost necessarily) abbreviated, was organized in New York City in January of 1914 by a group of laymen and clergy.[2] Members were solicited at the 1914 Synodical convention, but both the organization and its activities remained quite modest until 1917.

Plans for the quadricentennial celebration of the Reformation in that year included greater organization and activity. A full time business manager, J. F. E. Nickelsburg, was hired, and office space obtained. In sponsoring and promoting the first "National Lutheran Publicity Week," the ALPB for the first time in its activities (and probably also in the history of the Synod) released much material to the wire services. Fifty thousand tracts and more than 100,000 Luther stickers were also distributed.

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[1] As it happened, the bureau was disbanded and received no mention in the 1920 Annual.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, the following outline of the early history of the bureau is based on selections from early minutes, now lost, printed in AL, X (1927), 266-271.

Its sights raised by this quadricentennial program, the ALPB in 1918 replaced a spasmodically-issued bulletin with the monthly American Lutheran, under the editorship of Paul Lindemann. Members were sought outside the New York area, and in the following years the bureau grew rapidly. By 1921 work expanded to the point that a full time field secretary was needed, but, in spite of the executive committee's persistent efforts in that direction, the bureau had the services of such a man for only about a year.[1] By 1923 the annual budget had climbed to $25,000, three times what it had been in 1920;[2] there it remained for most years until the Depression.

During the Twenties the ALPB had four major activities: printing and distributing tracts, handling publicity for major Synodical celebrations, promoting a varied assortment of events, and sponsoring the American Lutheran.

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[1] Pastors Rudolph Ressmeyer and Arthur Herbert both served for short periods of time. For references to the field secretary matter, see ALPB Min., Dec. 20, 1920; in 1921: Jan. 16, Feb. 21, Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 21, Dec. 19; in 1922: June 21, Oct. 23, Dec. 18; in 1923: Feb. 19, Dec. 18; in 1929: Oct. 21, Dec. 16.

[2] AL, VII (1924), 23.

Extensive English tract publication was introduced to the Missouri Synod by the bureau and aggressively carried on throughout the Twenties. The only important shift came in 1920 when tracts, previously sold, were given away with an appeal for donations. Between 1921 and 1924, close to three million were shipped;[1] in eight out of the thirteen years after 1917, 50,000 was the minimum number of tracts printed annually.[2] To judge from titles published between 1917 and 1924, fully one-third explicitly mentioned the Lutheran church or Lutheran doctrine as such.[3] With the exception of a few German tracts after 1921,[4] all ALPB material was in English.

The publicity work done for the Synod in 1917 set a precedent for the ALPB. The Reformation quadricentennial celebration was followed by those for the Diet of Worms in 1921, for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Synod in 1922, and for the Concordia Seminary dedication in 1926. For these events the bureau usually employed ready-to-print plates and direct news releases; clip sheets of articles were also sent to pastors for release to their local editors. Occasionally the ALPB resorted to special projects to gain attention. In 1921, for example, a Diet of Worms stamp was printed and a copy sent to President Warren G. Harding; his acknowledgement, of course, was publicized.[1] In 1922, for the anniversary of the Synod, Harding was again approached and his answer, comparing the Perry County Stephanite Saxons to the Pilgrims, subsequently released to the wire services.[2]

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[1] AL, VIII (1925), 18.

[2] Compiled from scattered references in AL and ALPB Minutes.

[3] Typewritten list of tracts published by the ALPB, filed at CHI.

[4] Min., Aug. 15, 1921.

Another innovation of the bureau was a "National Lutheran Publicity Week," celebrated in most of the years after 1917. This included the usual program of aggressive advertising through the secular press and was apparently considered a success, for it was continued by the Synodical press committee which first took office in 1926.

An annual event directly sponsored by the bureau was a Lutheran day, held first at Ocean Grove, New Jersey in 1921. The primary objective was to get a high percentage of non-Lutherans in the audience and tell them about the Lutheran church.[3]

The most notable ALPB publicity effort was its sponsorship in 1928 of a contest for the slogan which best described the essence of the Lutheran message.[1] The contest received wide publicity in the press and some 2,500 entries were submitted--by far the greatest number from non-Lutherans. The ALPB panel of judges selected a Baptist entry: "A Changeless Christ for a Changing World." The prize was a free trip across the Atlantic in the ALPB European tour, another regular feature, begun in 1927.[2]

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[1] AL, IV (1921), 52. The stamp led to its own problems. Noted Graebner in the Witness, "It is very well to paste the new Luther stamps on the flap of your envelopes, but it jars us to see the Reformer standing upside down when he says, 'Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.'" XL (1921), 139.

[2] AL, V (1922), 37.

[3] AL, V (1922), 100.

These activities of the bureau were decidedly American both in spirit and technique. They reflected, even directly borrowed from, American society of the 1920's. Slogans, "days," "weeks," and press agentry were all part of the current scene. By their use, Missouri Synod Lutherans demonstrated to others, and to themselves, that they were members of an American church.

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As the official organ of the ALPB, the American Lutheran took publicity in its broadest sense as practical church work. To a degree that is almost unbelievable today, when seminary practical curricula go far beyond homiletics, the American Lutheran in the Twenties was a manual of rather elementary suggestions for the parish minister. The reader was advised how to write acceptable newspaper copy, to organize weekday religious instruction after regular public school hours, to put out effective publicity for specific events, to canvass efficiently for new members, to organize his congregation for improved contributions, to draw laymen into church work, to set up curricula for Sunday schools, and to build an architecturally sound church.[1]

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[1] Original idea suggested by Pastor Oscar Feucht. See AL, X (1927), 240.

[2] AL, X (1928), 294, 337, 388. AL, XI (1927), 45. Many of these special events, and a host of more minor ones, were originally the ideas of business manager Nickelsburg. Making a career out of his modest position at the ALPB office, Nickelsburg handled most of the day to day affairs of the bureau. His contribution to the ALPB was a major one, but, by its very nature, difficult to document.

The extremely unsophisticated level from which most of these articles started, especially in the early Twenties, provides a good clue to the degree of reorientation necessary among the Synod's clergy before they were ready to attract large numbers of Americans.[2] Until the seminaries began to offer courses on matters pertinent to a minister no longer restricted to German immigrants, the ALPB organ was *the* periodical manual of practical church work.

The essential motivation for all these pedagogical articles was evangelical. The *American Lutheran* was aimed outward. Integration into American society was announced already in the choice of the first word in the title,

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[1] I, 1 (1918), 3; III (1920), 144; II (1919), 47-48; I, 7 (1918), 4; I, 11 (1918), 8; III (1920), 15; III (1920), 44-45; VI (1923), 113-125.

[2] Scattered references in other sources reinforce the impression given by the *American Lutheran*. Fritz's advice on house to house canvassing was similarly elementary. *Practical Missionary*, pp. 36-41. As late as 1925 the *Lutheraner* hailed enthusiastically new techniques two pastors were using to locate prospects: one minister pored through tax records, the other checked with the public utilities company for new customers. LXXXI, 53.

American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, a choice made when "deutsche" still appeared in the official name of the Synod. Lindemann warned against the dangers of smug orthodoxy and against the siege mentality: "A church which has no other program than the careful immunizing of its clientele from the surrounding contamination by dreary pulpit warnings is going to find it hard to hold even what it has."[1] Without equivocating on social evils, Lindemann nevertheless held a more sophisticated attitude toward them than did the Witness.[2] The acid comment and invidious comparison so typical of the Lutheran Witness were absent from the American Lutheran. Lindemann was more interested in removing the beam from Lutheran eyes than in gratuitous assistance with the motes of others.

Because the magazine was not under Synodical supervision, Lindemann had considerable freedom in his editorials. In fact, he was under pressure to represent aggressively the reform element. One of the attractions of the magazine was that in it pastors and laymen could read opinions which could not appear in official Synodical organs. Accordingly, support from the younger men would have waned had Lindemann tried to placate the old guard by toning down his attacks. By stating his mind freely, Lindemann had more support than if he had been less controversial and more discreet.

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[1] AL, X (1927), 27.

[2] AL, XI (1928), 380, is a good example.

As the only non-censored, Synod-wide publication concerned with many facets of practical church work, the American Lutheran was a prominent rostrum for more acculturated spokesmen to urge ideas not yet accepted by those still thinking along lines traditional in the German Lutheran community. The home mission issues already mentioned were a good case in point. The magazine also had room for Graebner to campaign vigorously for more full time administrators, for Walter A. Maier to question the system of preparatory boarding schools, for Alfred Doerffler to support the Sunday schools, and for F. R. Webber to criticize unmercifully the church architecture and liturgics current in the Synod.[1]

The American Lutheran, in other words, introduced the Missouri Synod to the concept of a loyal opposition in an ecclesiastical organization. In most circles within the Synod this was a novel idea.[2] The Synod had been accustomed to theological opposition--or opposition it could label theological--and knew how to deal with this. If the party was within the Synod he could be disciplined or excommunicated; if without he could be fought with tract and periodical column. But the American Lutheran did not fit into such a neat category. The bureau's very practical program was theologically fairly neutral. When, in the late Thirties, the American Lutheran broadened its range to include theological questions, it had the concept of loyal opposition established to the satisfaction of all but the extreme right wing.

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[1] III (1920), 54; V (1922), 119; VI (1923), 65; VIII (1925), 120; IX (1926), 63-64; III (1920), 19; XI (1928), 357.

[2] Complained Henry B. Hemmeter to Graebner, "our Synod neither understands nor relishes an open fight for position or policy." May 24, 1923, TG 69.

The impact of the magazine can be judged only indirectly. Some 400 copies of the early numbers were mailed out in 1918; only a year later this had jumped to 2,300. By 1923 circulation stood at about 3,000; it rose another 1,500 in 1925 and by 1929 reached 7,800. This last figure was inflated, however, by approximately 3,400 subscriptions in the names of pastors and teachers, paid for by two laymen. Genuine subscriptions, then, were about 4,400. Even this figure, though, was eleven times the subscription list of the original issue.[1] By 1929 about 835 of the 2,900 pastors in the Synod subscribed to the American Lutheran.[2] In view of what the magazine stood for, that thirty percent of the Synod's pastors were subscribers at the close of the decade does show that the magazine had come to fill a need.

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[1] Furthermore, these circulation figures do not take into account the extra copies of special issues such as for the Lutheran Laymen's League or some special event. Thus, in 1918, 38,000 copies were shipped in all; in 1919, 79,000. Statistics compiled from scattered references in the American Lutheran and the ALPB minutes.

[2] AL, XII (1929), 573. Unfortunately, since no subscription lists survive, it is impossible to say which pastors received the magazine, let alone the geographical distribution. Educated guesses of clergy subscriptions prior to 1929 are impossible, for many copies were sent to men outside of the Synod and individual copies of the American Lutheran received unusually repeated exposure. Pastors might not subscribe, but would nevertheless read a colleague's or a library copy. Interview with Dr. Adolf Meyer.

The American Lutheran, in fact, filled a number of needs; its function was a complex and at times subtle one. The magazine served as a methodology textbook. It also served to crystallize and focus discrete pressures on the Synod for efficient administration, aggressive publicity, fresh ideas, and lay organization. By articulating previously vague or unpublicized feelings, and by presenting a vigorous program, the magazine not only represented, but enlarged the reform party in the Synod. There was a danger at this stage of acculturation that without a spokesman and a rostrum a part of the younger and/or English-speaking clergy would become so discouraged they might leave the Synod to its German, Old World ways. Between the war and the depression, this danger posed more peril to the future of the Missouri Synod than the hazards of publicizing dissenting opinion. The existence of an unofficial voice could thereby be a factor in holding inside the Synod the most discontented, the very group needed to force the necessary changes quickly.[1]

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[1] To the casual contributor, periodical writing, especially for the crusading press, may be deceptive. The writer may assume from seeing his printed column that he now has an audience, that his article cannot help but have effect. His own words achieve an independence from him and return him support and encouragement. (James Reston reflected this when, during the 1963 New York Times strike, he quipped, "How do I know what I think if I can't read what I write?" [Quoted in Time, Jan. 4, 1963, p. 28.])

To the unwary polemicist, then, the printed page, his printed page, can be both a voice and an audience--in effect, The bare existence of a reform group no more insured change in attitudes toward publicity than toward mission policy. The bureau was accused by some in the Synod of being a propagator of "church ballyhoo."[1] Remarked one pastor, "we do not advertise because the people that want us know where we are."[2] One correspondent protested that the originator of the Lutheran slogan contest ought to be spanked: "the Church of Jesus Christ needs no slogan to win a free trip to Europe, she can stand on the slogan uttered by the Master and His disciples."[3]

The bureau did have some support in St. Louis as early as 1914; seminary professors Ludwig Fuerbringer and George Mezger were charter members. In 1915, the St. Louis pastoral conference, one of the most influential in the Synod, endorsed the bureau. ALPB tracts were favorably reviewed in official Synodical organs. As of 1918, the Witness edi-

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a double safety valve. Similarly with the unwary reader. In scanning minority sentiment with which he agrees, he is likely to ascribe to it much more general acceptance than may have been the case. Thus encouraged, though, he is comforted by the thought that his day is not so far off as he feared.

These generalizations apply as well to the American Lutheran, even if one can cite no other proof than the very nature of the magazine.

[1] "Kirchliche Marktschreierei." AL, VII (1924), 115.

[2] AL, III (1920), 2.

[3] William Kaercher to Graebner, Jan. 25, 1928, TG 61.

tors, publicly at any rate, sanctioned the ALPB's work.[1]

On the other hand, a "venerable brother" dismissed the group with, "ein paar dumme Jungen wollen etwas anstelen [sic]."[2] Being in the East, the ALPB was automatically suspect in the viewpoint of St. Louis. This was true especially in the years between 1917 and 1920 when all the liberal and unionistic tendencies against which the Missouri Synod had fought in American Lutheranism were coming to a head in the Lutheran Bureau, the National Lutheran Commission, and the United Lutheran Church--all based in New York.[3] Early in its existence the bureau had to resist pressure to submit its tracts before publication to the St. Louis seminary faculty for censorship similar to that practiced on Concordia Publishing House products.[4]

Nevertheless the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau was a part of the Missouri Synod and proved itself and its cause too valuable to be ignored. By 1921 the Lutheran Witness was ready to pronounce unqualified approval of proper advertising. "The demand for church publicity which is heard in our Synod is not a sign of 'sectarian' tendency, nor is it a symptom of an 'itch for notoriety,'" declared Graebner. "It is a perfectly justifiable demand, and those who act upon it are thereby in no wise becoming guilty of un-Lutheran activity."[1] Characteristically, the Lutheraner was slower to make an equivalent statement, but in 1927 editor Fuerbringer did present a strong case for publicity. For his readers who associated publicity with Americanism, Fuerbringer pointed out that both Luther and the founders of the Missouri Synod employed church advertising in the proper way.[2]

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[1] AL, X (1927), 260. LW, XXXIV (1915), 43. DL, LXXVI (1920), 362; LW, XXXVI (1917), 75; DL, LXXIII (1917), 411. AL, X (1927), 267; cf., however, Graebner to C. M. Zorn, Jr., Jan. 14, 1919, TG 66.

[2] AL, X (1927), 260.

[3] Some of the suspicions were probably well founded to judge from the 1917 correspondence between William Schoenfeld, Paul Lindemann, W. C. Kohn, and Theodore Graebner regarding the Board for Army and Navy. TG 123.

[4] J. F. E. Nickelsburg. Interview, May 30, 1964.

Early in 1919 the ALPB was seriously considered to handle the fund raising campaign for the Lutheran Laymen's League endowment fund.[3] Nothing came of the proposal, but later that spring, the executive committee of the ALPB did decide to seek official Synodical endorsement.[4] There must have been a continuing fear of entrapment, however, for in March of 1920, when Pfotenhauer asked the bureau to appoint the eastern member of the press committee for the upcoming Synodical convention, the ALPB resolved that it did not feel it had such authority--though it did appoint the member.[1]

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[1] LW, XL (1921), 87.

[2] DL, LXXXIII (1927), 50-52, 211. See also LW, XLVII (1928), 237.

[3] Theo. Lamprecht to C. M. Zorn, Jr., Jan. 3, 1919; Graebner to Zorn, Feb. 11, 1919, TG 78. Apparently this triggered some discussion about the ALPB and the Synod. Documentation is tantalizingly sketchy on the point, but there is indication that the bureau resisted suggestions that it submit to St. Louis direction. AL, X (1927), 267; Graebner to Zorn, Jan. 14, 1919, TG 66.

[4] AL, II (1919), 49.

The following month, bureau president H. P. Eckhardt recommended that the ALPB petition the Synod to take over and expand the bureau's work; he apparently felt there were too many organizations in the Synod, resulting in too many appeals for memberships.[2] His motion was lost because of "divided opinion," but Eckhardt and Pastor Arthur Brunn were authorized to draw up a plan of cooperation with the Lutheran Laymen's League.[3] The result was an overture to the LLL, suggesting closer cooperation, suggesting further, however, that since the ALPB needed its pastors (who could not become members of a laymen's organization) both groups ought to remain intact. According to the LLL minutes, the ALPB offered the league several seats on the bureau's executive committee. The LLL, however, felt that such activity was beyond its scope--though as individuals they were ready to endorse the bureau, and Brunn was given the floor at the LLL convention in June.[1]

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[1] Min., Mar. 15, 1920.

[2] See C. M. Zorn Jr. to Theo. Lamprecht, Feb. 29, 1920, TG 78.

[3] Min., April 19, 1920. Theodore Lamprecht, who was president of the LLL, and also prominent in the ALPB (he became president of the latter in October, 1920), may also have been involved in moves to join the two organizations; but this statement is impossible to document, for his papers are not extant.

General recognition of a sort did come when the 1920 Synodical convention voted its thanks to the ALPB for the special Synodical number of the American Lutheran. After a pointed request, the bureau got an official letter of approval from Synodical president Pfotenhauer in August of 1921. In that same year the English District endorsed the bureau, and urged district congregations to support it financially. Implicit approval of a different sort came in 1922 when a chapter on publicity by Lindemann was included in a book issued by the Synod to mark its seventy-fifth anniversary.[2] Finally, in 1926, the Synod accepted ALPB ideas to the extent of establishing an official, permanent Synodical Press Committee. The original members of the committee were drawn from ALPB staff.[3]

Throughout the Twenties the ALPB enjoyed a semi-official status within the Synod. For instance, at the Synodical anniversary in 1922 an official publicity committee of St. Louis seminary professors was appointed. This committee then delegated to the bureau the administration of publicity activities. The bureau was also expected to pay its own expenses; in the end though, the Synodical Board of Directors assumed an ALPB debt of $1,500 incurred in the anniversary advertising. Much the same thing happened in 1926.[1]

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[1] ALPB Min., May 17, 1920. LLL Min., May 14, 1920. LLL Pro., 1920, 27.

[2] AL, III (1920), 94. LW, XL (1921), 232. ALPB Min., July 18, Aug. 15, 1921. Ebenezer, pp. 456-465.

[3] When the committee was hampered by a niggardly appropriation, the bureau underwrote its work. ALPB Min., Mar. 21, 1927.

A similarly informal, but probably closer, liaison was maintained with the Walther League. The league endorsed the bureau as early as 1915. Starting in 1918, Julius Nickelsburg, ALPB business manager, was authorized to attend the league convention.[2] The league repeatedly endorsed the bureau and heard appeals for funds during the Twenties. Perhaps in return for such backing, the ALPB managed the publicity for annual drives to support the Walther League tuberculosis sanitorium.[3]

A number of mergers were proposed during the Twenties after Eckhardt's, but none were seriously considered until 1929, when the Lutheran Laymen's League was in the process of reorganization. In March, Pastor Fred Lindemann and his brother, Editor Paul, met in St. Louis with the LLL reorganization and constitution committee. Since Lutheran publicity was to be one of the main objectives of the reorganized league, the LLL committee suggested that the LLL take over the work of the bureau.

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[1] AL, V (1922), 22, 65; VIII (1925), 16; Lindemann to Graebner, July 28, 1922, TG 67; BdD Min., 220926DD; AL, IX (1926), 59; The Daily Record of Proceedings [convention bulletin], June 11, 1926.

[2] LW, XXXIV (1915), 252; AL, X (1927), 267.

[3] LW, XXXV (1917), 261; AL, VII (1924), 84, 95; WLM, XXXV (1926), 95. AL, VIII (1925), 16; X (1927), 266.

In their report to the ALPB board, the Lindemanns noted "this, of course, would mean that the ALPB be moved to St. Louis and lose its identity." They added that "in view of the embryonic status of the present LLL movement," to amalgamate with it at this time would be unwise. Their recommendation was adopted--along with a resolution encouraging the LLL in its efforts to reorganize for greater service in the work of the church.[1]

Parkinsonian law applies to ecclesiastical as well as to business or governmental agencies. While the Missouri Synod has no pope, it does have a Vatican City. For an organization representing the initiative and labor of those who manned the "verlorner Posten" in the East to become another of the offices in St. Louis would have meant the loss of more than an ordinary source of pride. It would have meant also the loss of an important voice. To be part of a larger organization would mean that pressure might be brought by the conservative wing to modify editorial policies in the American Lutheran and perhaps to change the activities of the bureau itself. In the view of its founders, censorship would have defeated the very purpose of the magazine. Seeing as its function a leadership of ideas rather than administration, the ALPB and the American Lutheran had much to lose and little to gain by amalgamation.

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[1] Min., Jan. 14, Feb. 18, and Mar. 18, 1929.

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Though no one today can say exactly why an individual chose to associate himself with the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, it is still possible to construct a composite profile of the type of man who actively served the ALPB. To sketch this profile, information was gathered concerning a list of pastors who were active in the founding of the bureau or who served on the ALPB board of directors up to 1929.[1] The data collected make it clear that these pastors formed a distinct group with two main subdivisions. One

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[1] The board of directors (the successor, as of October 1921, of the original executive committee) was a self-perpetuating body entrusted with policy making, actual administration, and a fair share of the day to day work of the bureau. Some of the men on the list served throughout the Twenties, others only for a relatively short time. For the purposes of this list, all they had in common was ordination and enough enthusiasm to help establish the bureau or to accept the directors' invitation to join the board.

National officers of the ALPB were largely honorary and in any case were too scattered about the country to have an active part in the bureau; hence they were not included, save when the same men were founders. Laymen, too, served on the board of directors, but information on them was so fragmentary and difficult to gather that they were regretfully also excluded.

The completed list included thirty-four pastors, but no information was located on one of the founders who subsequently withdrew from the Synod. The working list totaled thirty-three. Of these, one was a professor at the Bronxville preparatory school, the remaining thirty-two were all in the parish ministry, save one who moved from the ministry to the deanship of the St. Louis seminary during the Twenties. All but three of the congregations served were in the New York area. Whenever possible, information on parishes served is from 1924.

Information was gathered from the pages of the American Lutheran, from obituaries in the Lutheran Witness, from current ALPB office publicity files, from Atlantic District personnel files, from pertinent editions of the SYB, and from questionnaires sent those men still living.

segment was distinguished by its youth. Fifteen out of the thirty whose date of birth was located were born after 1890. In other words, even by 1929, nearly half of the pastors involved were under forty. The second group, those born before 1890, may be defined in another way: two-thirds used only English in their churches.

Thus, while the roots of the ALPB lay in the English District (all three of the pastors elected officers in 1914 were of that district),[1] the bureau succeeded during the post-war years in attracting the next generation of clergy from other districts.

The younger group accounted chiefly for another unique characteristic of these ALPB men. Fourteen out of the thirty-three did post-seminary work at an non-Synodical institution. Of these, all but two studied at secular universities. The ALPB list included almost twice the number of pastors with secular graduate training as were on the combined faculties of the St. Louis and Springfield seminaries as late as 1930. The bureau's record was phenomenal at this stage of acculturation. This was a time when St. Louis seminarians were bluntly told that those who hoped to further their Synodical careers by advanced schooling at universities were in for a rude awakening,[2] and when the Witness was militant in denunciations of the God-less, atheistic, and immoral universities. What the university training meant in terms of intellectual vigor, individualistic temperament, and broadened horizons cannot be precisely defined for each man, but the general implications are clear.

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[1] AL, X (1927), 266.

[2] Theodore Graebner, quoted by Adolf Meyer, interview.

And yet the typical bureau pastor was no fire-eating university liberal determined to dump German and the Old World heritage. Of the fourteen with non-Lutheran post-seminary training, but six served churches where only English was used. The other eight served parishes using a ratio of German varying up to one-half.

In the total group, seventeen pastors used only English in their work. Partly this represents the continuing presence in disproportionate strength of the English District; eight of the seventeen were affiliated with it. However, that one-third of the men not in that district used only English indicates a linguistic acculturation somewhat ahead of the Synod generally. The high percentage of university training and use of English were atypical, but there is no obvious evidence that the ALPB group was a nucleus of malcontents outside of Synodical tradition or uncommitted to its heritage. Eleven were sons of pastors or teachers; two more were married to daughters of pastors.[1]

The ALPB pastors were not, however, entirely typical in their pre-seminary background. An abnormally high percentage graduated from the Synodical preparatory school at Bronxville, New York. Ten out of the twenty-eight for which information was found attended at Bronxville. In part this reflects a geographical bias in place of birth: fifteen were born east of the Appalachians, only thirteen to the west and two in Europe. At the time the Synod's strength lay within the Mississippi Valley. But the ALPB's accent was not only American rather than German, but Eastern instead of Midwestern. Not only was control centered in the New York metropolitan area, but it was in the hands of men born and raised in the East.

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[1] Possibly there were even more in these categories since father's occupation rarely appears in obituaries. Whether the ALPB percentage was high or low compared to the Synod's pastors generally is difficult to say, but at least it was in the Missouri Synod tradition of a highly inter-related clergy.

Twelve of the group served as chaplains or camp pastors during the war. For comparison, fewer than 200 of the 2,450 pastors in the Synod at the time had an active connection with chaplaincy work.[1]

Another striking correlation exists between the press of the American Lutheran and the school statistics of the congregations served by those committed to the bureau. In contrast to the Witness and the Messenger, the American Lutheran took little part in the defense of the parochial day school, but was a vigorous exponent of Sunday schools. Of the pastors on the ALPB list, only five served congregations which maintained parochial schools. However, every congregation had a Sunday school; eleven had enrollments over two hundred, with one going up to 675.

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[1] SYB, 1918, 110.

A typical profile of the pastor who was affiliated with the ALPB, then, would take one of two forms. The first, an older man born and raised in the East (9 out of 15); a firm--even aggressive--advocate of English work; connected with the English District (6 out of 15 versus 2 out of 15 for the younger men); toward the end of a career serving a minority group within the Synod.

The other, a relatively young man, born in the East; the son or son-in-law of a pastor (9 out of 15 versus 5 out of 15 for the older men); university trained (10 out of 15); about as likely as his older colleague to have served as chaplain during the war, but in many cases too young to have done so; willing to use either language as the situation dictated, but looking to English for future growth; and, being young and enthusiastic, anxious to see his church gain the attention he felt it deserved; ready to experiment with new methods to increase efficiency and to broaden the appeal of the Missouri Synod.

The most important general characteristics of these pastors who served the bureau were broadened horizons and contacts outside of the immigrant group through long use of English and English District background, through experience in military camps during the war, or through a university atmosphere, or through a combination of the three.

There was probably in addition a common attitude shared by these men who were of the transitional generation in the process of acculturation. This attitude may have been closest to a double-edged resentment. Resentment against contemporary America for permitting, even condoning, excesses of wartime hysteria against the church to which these pastors belonged and which embodied their heritage and owned their loyalties. And at the same time resentment against this very church for so holding their loyalties, for the affiliation which labeled them foreign and unable to speak to the American scene--when they knew themselves to be thoroughly American and felt their message relevant.

The American Lutheran Publicity Bureau of the Twenties was based, then, on a framework built by a few (mostly English District) pioneers. It grew largely because of the coincidence of Reformation celebration enthusiasm, wartime hysteria, and a new generation of clergy ready to add an American cultural structure to a German theological foundation. The result was a loyal opposition, the vanguard of the movement for efficient church methods and English language home missions.

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There was nothing else in the Synod quite like the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau. But this is not to say that the East or those active in the ALPB had a monopoly in the Synod upon initiative and an outward orientation. Already in 1915, Cleveland Lutherans, acting on ALPB propaganda, established a city publicity committee. Similar groups existed in Kansas City and in Chicago.[1] In addition there were many informal, personal contacts about the country, especially among the younger men, men anxious to see the Missouri Synod solve more expeditiously the problems posed by new circumstances. For instance, a group of young pastors in Massachusetts discussed by round robin letter the reforms they wanted to see.[2]

The most coherent and active local group was the Lutheran Publicity Organization in St. Louis. John H. C. Fritz, one of the founders of the ALPB, and a vigorous spokesman for the reform group, moved to St. Louis shortly after the New York bureau was started. According to the minutes, he was present at the organizational meeting of the Lutheran Publicity Organization in December 1916, and became one of the moving spirits of the LPO. Fritz was not the sole founder of the LPO, however, for other St. Louis pastors were psychologically ready to present the Lutheran church outside of the Missouri Synod. The Reformation festival provided additional prompting.[3] The ALPB, local St. Louis initiative, and quadricentennial zeal thus synchronized to produce in the Midwest a program similar in nature and activity to that of the New York bureau.

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[1] LW, XXXIV (1915), 363; XLV (1926), 59; W. C. A. Martens, "Lutheran Publicity Association of Greater Chicago," in The Thirty-Fourth Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, June 16-29, 1929 [Convention booklet published by the Chicago churches], p. 33.

[2] Paul Prokopy to Graebner, June 10, 1920, TG 61.

[3] Interview with Pastor Alfred Doerffler, also one of the founders of the LPO.

Included in this ALPB-LPO program was a wide range of minor activities: Reformation festivals were sponsored, books on Reformation history were distributed to local non-Lutheran clergy, Missouri Synod publications were placed in public libraries, marked copies of the Witness sent to prominent persons in the city, tracts commissioned and distributed, and an extensive program of paid advertising in local papers carried on.[1] The Lutheran Publicity Organization concentrated particularly on the last; the greatest satisfaction was a full page paid advertisement in the Globe-Democrat during the 1929 quadricentennial of Luther's catechism.[2]

Curiously, despite great similarities between the activities of the ALPB and the LPO, in several successive reorganizations the St. Louis group moved progressively further away from formal affiliation with New York.[3] What started much as a branch of the ALPB finally in 1924 adopted the recommendation of its membership committee that "the dues be reduced to $1.00 and that we sever our affiliation with the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau" because, the membership committee stated, "it was their experience that a great many more members could be secured if that was done."[4]

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[1] LPO Min., Mar. 29, Aug. 29, Sept. 26, 1917; Jan. 24, Jan. 31, Feb. 28, 1918.

[2] Min., May 21, 1929, p. 31.

[3] Min., April 12, Oct. 3, 1917; June 26, 1922.

[4] Min., May 27, 1924, pp. 2, 5.

The recommendation was a commentary either on the penury of St. Louis Lutherans or on the reputation of the ALPB--perhaps both.

None of the LPO activities were as important as its sponsorship of noon downtown Lenten services; these were the main reason the group was founded and continued to be its central thrust throughout the Twenties. The pattern established in 1917 was generally followed thereafter. Out of town speakers were imported to generate added interest, a downtown theater hired, and a strong newspaper campaign begun, including both news releases and paid advertising.[1] The services themselves were short (twenty-five minutes), usually including not much more than a musical selection, the sermon, and a prayer. Because the emphasis was on attracting non-Lutherans, the speakers did not wear gowns and were cautioned to preach a positive message, avoiding denominational controversy.[2]

The LPO was so pleased by the success of its efforts in 1917[3] that the officers wrote other Lutheran centers to spread the news.[4] This, combined with coverage in the Witness, Lutheraner, and American Lutheran, led to rapid adoption of the idea. Both the ALPB in New York, and Chicago Lutherans also held well-advertised, noon services in 1917--though limited to Holy Week. By 1921 Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and St. Paul had conducted services. Houston and Buffalo were included in 1923.[1]

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[1] See Min., 1917.

[2] Min., Feb. 15, 1917. Interview with Alfred Doerffler.

[3] In 1918 the attendance was nearly a thousand a day, and there is no indication that this was significantly higher than the year previous. LW, XXXVII (1918), 77.

[4] Min., Dec. 7, 1917.

6

In 1923 the Lutheran Publicity Organization began a new activity when it pledged one thousand dollars toward a proposed Lutheran radio station in St. Louis.[2] Though the LPO did not play an indispensable role in the early history of station KFUO, the St. Louis group did provide significant moral and financial support at an early stage. More important, the leadership of the LPO was part of an English-speaking interlocking directorate which functioned smoothly in coordinating support from different groups in the Synod for a Lutheran radio station.

As early as 1922, individual pastors in the Synod broadcast services locally.[3] In spite of continuing opposition, which claimed that radio services would encourage people to stay home from church,[4] increasing numbers of services were broadcast during the Twenties, some regularly. The congregation in Valparaiso, Indiana even had its own small station.[1] However, the St. Louis station, KFUO, generated the most enthusiasm. The enthusiasm was not only because the station was to be exclusively Lutheran. In the Twenties a radio station of any appreciable power was not merely a local or state-wide thing; frequencies were relatively uncrowded then and a station such as KFUO might be received throughout the country. Further, because it would undoubtedly use English almost exclusively, the station would reflect the ideals of the reform party--indeed, as it turned out, would be under the control of the mission critics. There was good reason, then, for enthusiastic backing both by the Synod generally and from members of the reform group.

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[1] LW, XXXVI (1917), 88, 104. AL, IV (1921), 49. LW, XLII (1923), 156, 186.

[2] Min., May 21, 1923.

[3] LW, XLI (1922), 109, 230, 330; AL, V (1922), 68-69; VII (1924), 66.

[4] Reported in LW, XLIV (1925), 38, 73; XLV (1926), 259; WLM, XXXVII (1928), 84.

In August of 1921, the subject of a Lutheran radio station came up in a conversation between Pastors Richard Kretzschmar and Walter A. Maier at a Wheatridge Sanitorium dedication near Denver, Colorado. The more the two men discussed it, the more excited they became.[2] However, for the next eighteen months the project received little public attention. Witness editor Graebner wrote several times during 1922 about the temptations radio would bring into the home, but he did not mention possible missionary use. Maier did refer to the evangelical potential of radio in the Messenger, but during 1922 only in a general way.[1]

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[1] WLM, XXXVII (1928), 84; XXXVIII (1930), 577. AL, VII (1924), 104; LW, XLIV (1925), 78.

[2] LW, XL (1921), 282; WLM, XXXV (1926), 636.

The campaign to bring twentieth century technology to a nineteenth century immigrant church was not begun in earnest until February, 1923. Richard Kretzschmar, chairman of the seminary Board of Control, then took the initiative by proposing to that board the establishment of a Lutheran radio station either at Concordia Publishing House or at the seminary. On the Board of Control was A. G. Brauer, a prominent St. Louis layman, active in the LPO and secretary of the Lutheran Laymen's League.[2] Kretzschmar was encouraged by his board to approach the LLL directors, meeting in St. Louis the following week.[3] This he did, and by energetic lobbying, and, very likely, with advance work by Brauer, came away with more than two thousand dollars from the men personally, as well as promises of further support.[4]

In the March Messenger, editor Maier featured the article, "Why Not a Lutheran Radio Station?" During March, also, J. H. C. Fritz, dean of students at the seminary, encouraged the seminary students to contribute, and to ask their friends to donate, toward the new station; in the April Messenger he broadened his appeal to include Walther

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[1] LW, XLI (1922), 244, 407. WLM, XXX (1922), 276, 420.

[2] He was also Kretzschmar's brother-in-law.

[3] Bd. of Control Min., Feb. 19, 1923.

[4] H. P. Hahn to H. Hohenstein, April 30, 1930; E. J. Griese to R. Kretzschmar, April 7, 1923; Griese to J. H. C. Fritz, April 28, 1923, filed at KFUO offices.

Leaguers.[1] Late in April the executive committee of the LPO decided to recommend to the general body that $1,000 be appropriated for the radio work. They had been encouraged to do so the month previously by the pastoral conference of St. Louis.[2] Pastors L. J. Sieck and Alfred Doerffler were both prominent in St. Louis, and also on the LPO executive committee. Both were also close to the seminary; Doerffler was on the electoral college of that institution and Sieck was later to be president of the seminary. By late May, Dean Fritz reported about $7,000 collected.[3] With a minimum of publicity, an interlocking directorate had swung into line Concordia Seminary, the Lutheran Publicity Organization, the Lutheran Laymen's League, and the Walther League.

The major fund raising drive for the educational institutions of the Synod during the summer and fall of 1923 precluded any solicitation for KFUO until the following year.[4] But in 1924 Fritz, Kretzschmar, Maier and layman Henry Horst descended on the July Walther League convention to stump for the new station.[5] The league appropriated

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[1] WLM, XXXI (1923), 314. LW, XLII (1923), 121; WLM, XXXV (1927), 636; Bd. of Control Min., Mar. 19, 1923. WLM, XXXI (1923), 378.

[2] LPO Min., April 16, 1923. Bd. of Control Min., Mar. 19, 1923.

[3] Bd. of Control Min., May 28, 1923.

[4] AL, VII (1924), 19.

[5] WLM, XXXV (1927), 636 ff.

$7,000. Contracts were subsequently signed for the installation of a 500 watt station costing about $14,000.[1] KFUO was officially opened December 14, 1924. The makeshift studios in the attic of the old seminary building in South St. Louis were to give rise to dozens of legends, but the first Lutheran radio station was on the air several evenings a week. Mail from the radio audiences of the dedicatory services alone came from thirty states.[2]

In the spring of 1925, A. G. Brauer took to the Chicago meeting of the LLL executive committee a letter signed by Fritz asking the league to underwrite the station's running expenses of some $7,000 annually. The league agreed, and in so doing set a precedent which assured the future of KFUO.[3] When the seminary moved to new quarters, the league assumed the cost of new studios and more powerful equipment for the station.[4] The decade closed with negotiations under way for a national hookup to broadcast a Lutheran program sponsored, again, by the LLL.[5]

Ultimately radio station KFUO and the precedent of active support from the Lutheran Laymen's League were to lead to the nation-wide radio evangelism career of Walter A. Maier. The Missouri Synod emerged after the Second World War as the leader among Protestant denominations in international radio and television programming.

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[1] Bd. of Control Min., Aug. 14, 1924.

[2] LW, XLII (1924), 476-477.

[3] Bd. of Control Min., Mar. 31, 1925; LLL Min., April 3, 1925.

[4] Pro., 1926, 240; LW, XLV (1926), 198.

[5] WLM, XXXVIII (1930), 672; LW, XLIX (1930), 280, 292, 343, 368, 437.

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However much the proponents of KFUO talked about the missionary uses of radio, and however much the ALPB spoke of the evangelical purposes of publicity, the motives were more complex than a simple Christian desire to spread the Gospel. Walter A. Maier and Paul Lindemann were not insincere when they appealed to religious zeal in the cause of radio and of publicity in general. However, these appeals coincided neatly with the moment when an immigrant denomination was first generally susceptible to the lure of American recognition.

This coincidence resulted in part from the maturation of the Synod's constituency. The associations and expectations of many Missouri Synod Lutherans were no longer circumscribed within immigrant limits. By the Twenties, many laymen felt enough a part of American society to care that their neighbors know and think highly of the Missouri Synod. In other words, the Missouri Synod Lutheran's peers were no longer German immigrants, but the general American community. In this change, Missouri Lutherans adopted in large measure the values of the Americans among whom they lived. The aggressive advertising typical of the United States in the

1920's was a case in point. The Missouri Synod accepted publicity later and with more reservations than most American denominations, but the Synod did finally accept it. Theological and sociological motives meshed both in the calls for church publicity and in the publicity itself.

A further reason for the coincidence of the two was that, until the Twenties, the Synod, much more than today, was a nebulous abstraction to many laymen.[1] While the publishing house and one of the seminaries were in St. Louis, the only full time official, President Pfotenhauer, lived in Chicago. Various part time offices were administered from wherever the incumbent happened to live. The Synodical budget was miniscule and no Synodical program was conducted forcefully enough to reach and arouse enthusiasm at the parish level. The conscious affiliation of many laymen stopped at the boundary of their own parish. Most churches apparently did not even have their Synodical affiliation on the sign at the front of the building.[2] For most laymen (and very likely a fair share of the clergy), the German language provided one of the chief centripetal forces in the Synod.

As German became less exclusively used, some means had to be found to overcome the centrifugal pressure of English. Some other means to group identity had to be discovered. The Lutheran Witness tried to promote self-consciousness partly by telling Missouri Synod Lutherans who they were not. Another method, more in keeping with the spirit of the times, was to encourage what would arouse a feeling of pride and identity. This positive approach fit at least some of the psychological needs of the more acculturated constituency. When Walter A. Maier denounced those who acted as if they were ashamed to be Lutherans,[1] he reflected the needs of particularly the younger generation in the Synod. The younger people coming of age in the Twenties, American in outlook, were not likely to be satisfied by affiliation with a church which was completely unknown in its community.

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[1] I am indebted to Prof. John Strietelmeier for calling this fact to my attention. See J. H. C. Fritz, Church Finances (CPH, 1922), p. 7; LLL Min., (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 11; interview with Theodore Eckhardt, July 16, 1963.

[2] DL, LXXVIII (1922), 426; LW, XLII (1923), 92; WLM, XXXV (1926), 175.

Simply put, the Missouri Synod was in need of reassurance after the bruising experience of the war, of recognition by the community into which the constituency was integrating itself. KFUO proved to progressive Missouri Synod Lutherans that their church was up with the times; it had the value of increasing group consciousness and collective pride. The noon Lenten services had the same value. Even for the Lutheran businessman who did not attend these services, this Lenten program could be a source of satisfaction. His church was doing something which came to the attention of his American business colleagues and associates downtown.

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[1] WLM, XXXI (1923), 512; XXXII (1924), 264.

Reformation celebrations performed a similar role. As John C. Baur recognized in 1917, the more one takes the lead in publicity, "the more will a Lutheran self-consciousness be stirred among our people. And the happier one is that he is a Lutheran and not something else, the more pleasure he has in sacrifice and work for his church."[1] To the various Reformation celebrations between 1917 and 1929, the Missouri Synod added two festivals of its own: the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Synod (1922) and the dedication of Concordia Seminary in 1926. In themselves, none of these events were of much long term significance. Yet, as a means of drawing Missouri Synod Lutherans out of their ghetto and giving them a sense of their collective power, these festivals were freighted with immense importance.

The 1917 celebration, being the first, was particularly critical. Gatherings were extensively reported especially in the American Lutheran.[2] The most characteristic tone of the dispatches was a barely suppressed pride and surprise that the German Lutherans had been able to pull off something that made the community sit up and take notice. From St. Louis came the flat statement that any resident who remained unaware of the Reformation celebration "was either unconscious or out of town." And the Quincy, Illinois correspondent revealed much when he mused, "our Lutherans here, who are of a rather conservative disposition, were themselves amazed at the brilliant success of our enterprise. During the weeks and months of preparation none of them seems to have realized the magnitude of the enterprise upon which they had entered, and they now marvel how it was possible that they could have been persuaded to attempt such a far-reaching enterprise, which if it should have failed, would have brought contempt and ridicule down upon our heads."[1]

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[1] DL, LXXIII (1917), 84.

[2] I, 1 (1918), 4ff.

The typical form of these Reformation quadricentennial festivals was a mass meeting. These were made possible by the increased use in the Twenties of electronic amplification systems.[2] The biggest hall or arena in town was hired--and filled. Massed choirs performed and a prominent speaker was brought from out of town for the occasion. This type of event culminated in the 1929 Chicago audience of between 40,000 and 60,000.[3]

The popularity of the mass celebration was understandable. Missouri Synod Lutherans were reassured and encouraged to see thousands of fellow Lutherans in one place. Such a meeting increased an estimation of the Synod's potential; it provided some tangible unit larger than the individual congregation with which to identify. Even after the event newspaper coverage promoted Lutheran self-confidence and self-esteem.

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[1] AL, I, 1 (1918), 5.

[2] See LW, XLIII (1924), 397; XLVII (1928), 305; XLVIII (1929), 159.

[3] LW, XLVIII (1929), 242.

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Radio work, downtown Lenten services, and mass Reformation celebrations all served to advertise the Missouri Synod as well as to increase Lutheran self-awareness. As was recognized at the time, buildings, too, had publicity value. After a pronounced lull during the war years, Missouri Synod congregations again engaged in a large-scale building program. Fewer churches were built than in the years prior to the war, but, as in other denominations, significantly more money was spent on each church. The value of property held by congregations rose from forty-one million dollars in 1919 to ninety-seven million in 1929.[1] Much of this increase was due to construction rather than to inflated property values.[2]

Unabashed in his appeals to emergent-denominational pride, Witness editor Graebner suggested that Missouri Synod churches should be built on the main street of towns. It is high time, he wrote, to stop the ancient practice of building at the edge of town on a cheap lot some member donated. He was quite ready to complain in sarcastic fashion, and to reprint the complaints of others, about difficulties in finding an obscurely located church. When congregations did build in a prominent spot, the Witness provided news coverage.[1]

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[1] SYB, 1919, 144; 1929, 152. According to government statistics, between 1916 and 1926 the value of the Synod's property tripled. The average per church rose 50%. Religion Bodies: 1926, I, 303.

[2] Theodore Graebner estimated three-quarters of a million dollars of construction begun in the St. Louis area in 1928 alone. LW, XLVII (1928), 141. See also LW, XLVIII (1929), 2-3; WLM, XXXIII (1924), 214. Bare statistics of the number of church dedications each year are available in the SYB. For American denominations in general, see William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York, 1950), p. 413; and Clifton Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1960), p. 545.

While Graebner called for central church locations to advertise the Missouri Synod, others pointed out that better designed churches performed the same function. Here again, motives were more complex than simple evangelical publicity. The new churches reflected not only the greater affluence of Missouri Synod Lutherans in the Twenties, but also the greater sophistication and higher esthetic standards that came with rising social and economic position. Even if they could not build, congregations sought to remodel their buildings "into something 'more churchly.'"[2]

"A young Lutheran told us recently," reported F. R. Webber in the American Lutheran, "that unless we give more attention to the appearance of our churches, and the manner of conducting our church services, we will find it more difficult to hold our people. Our Lutheran people are increasing in wealth and in culture, and it is becoming more and more difficult to persuade folks who live in neat, nicely furnished homes to go to a church that is shabby and ugly, and with an order of service that is meager and perhaps crude."[1]

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[1] LW, XL (1921), 215, 219, 285; XLI (1922), 220. See also WLM, XXXVIII (1930), 320.

[2] LCA, IV (Nov. 1925). For instance, when Trinity congregation in East St. Louis remodeled in 1926, "new, straight pews . . . [were] put in to replace the old circular pews." LW, XLV (1926), 414.

The Missouri Synod had behind it a long and rich Lutheran heritage, but much of this had been neglected. In 1927, F. R. Webber recalled the state of church architecture before World War I:

> Most of us had the idea that the church building was what country folks used to call the "auditorium," and that the chancel is but a little niche tacked on somewhere, perhaps on the long side, or even at one corner of the building. In those days we made our chancels as small as possible, for sectarian influence was a powerful thing, even as late as the year 1914. In order to escape any suspicion of high-churchery, we made our chancels very wide and very shallow. . . .
>
> In those days our altars were seldom over five feet in length, with curiously spiked and heavily crocketed erections back of them, which we liked to enamel white. There was a tiny brass crucifix, a pair of Renaissance candelsticks, two pots of begonias made of galvanized iron and enameled in a most naturalistic manner, and a "cover" made of velvet or velour, with metallic fringe and huge tassels at each corner. On the front of the altar was the inevitable Alpha and Omega, for that was all the symbolism that we knew, and we used it for all that it was worth.

The ceiling above the altar looked "like one half of a huge umbrella. We used to paint it Prussian blue, with large gilt stars, and always a naturalistic white dove emerging from some pinkish clouds." On the floor was a red carpet "with nice large roses about the size of a head of cabbage." Altar equipment included a book of long, extremely rhetorical prayers.

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[1] XI (1928), 357. See also AL, XII (1929), 622.

> These were composed originally by a famous preacher "down East," noted for his oratorical gifts, and they spread into every Lutheran church body where the English language was used. One of them began somewhat as follows: "Oh Thou King, incomprehensible, eternal, omnipotent, Who dwellest in light unapproachable, whose glory is unchangeable, eternal, immortal, and indivisible, enable us to approach Thine aweful majesty with the humiliation and contrition that should become such vile sinners as we."[1]

The pulpit of such a church "was octagonal, it stood on an octagonal post and the floor . . . was ten or twelve steps above the floor of the church. . . . The pulpit had an octagonal canopy, with an elaborately jig-sawed drop-cresting, everything painted white."[2] The rest of the building was distinguished chiefly by heavenly blue ceilings dotted with stars, gaudy stained glass windows with Teutonic Biblical characters, and mail-order fixtures.[3]

According to Webber, the more radical pastors of the English and Atlantic districts reacted strongly to the old style architecture and adopted a design they considered less "dutchy." This was the "Akron plan."[4] Such buildings were either octagonal on plan, or else a Greek cross with very shallow arms. The entrance was in one corner. The floor sloped sharply toward the opposite corner, where there was a very small, triangular platform with a mere table about four feet long for an altar. Rows of cushioned seats[1] were arranged in concentric semicircles.[2]

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[1] LCA, V (Mar. 1927).

[2] Webber to author, Nov. 6, 1962.

[3] Ibid. This description is verified in AL, VI (1923), 111.

[4] So-called because it was first developed by the Methodist Episcopal Church in Akron. See Andrew L. Dummond, The Church Architecture of Protestantism (Edinburgh, 1934), p. 95.

More conservative clergy in the English District, not so belligerently Americanized, not so ready to follow the lead of the Reformed denominations, settled on a compromise. Their churches were rectangular, but proportionately longer than the earliest ones; the chancel was proportionately deeper and less wide. "The floor sloped, but the altar was on axis, not in the corner. There were usually two corner towers of unequal height. There were rudimentary transcepts that projected but a foot from the side walls. Twelve steps led to the main doorway."[3]

By the early Twenties, there was increasing agitation for improvement in Synodical architecture. In 1921 Concordia Publishing House brought out P. E. Kretzmann's _Christian Art in the Place and in the Form of Lutheran Worship_, an early attempt to teach Lutherans the rudiments of correct church architecture, symbolism, and liturgics.[4]

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[1] Or even theater-type chairs.

[2] Webber's assertions are born out by a notice of a 1919 church dedication. Immanuel congregation of Schuyler, Nebraska, "the first wholly English congregation of the Missouri Synod in Nebraska," dedicated a building noteworthy for its "spacious bowl-shaped auditorium." _LW_, XXXVIII (1919), 79.

[3] Webber to author, Nov. 6, 1962.

[4] Kretzmann's interest in the subject is apparent in

Others proposed some sort of agency to assist congregations.[1] Predictably, the English District took the first concrete steps by appointing an architecture committee in 1922.[2] The committee promptly began publishing Lutheran Church Art, a bimonthly bulletin. At the 1923 triennial convention, the committee was sponsored by the Synod as a whole. As a Synodical agency, the committee enlarged its constituency and was consulted by an average of a hundred congregations annually.[3]

Secretary of the committee and its most active and vocal member was Pastor F. R. Webber.[4] Webber was strongly influenced by the Gothic revival which began in the American denominations prior to the war, and continued into the Twenties. He became the champion of English Gothic in the Missouri Synod and conducted nearly a one-man campaign for honesty of materials and craftsmanship in church building. Webber pleaded with congregations to employ a professional church architect and to look for artistic quality rather than sheer size in churches. More than any other single man, he was responsible for some of the fine Missouri Synod

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his earlier The Liturgical Element in the Earliest Forms of the Medieval Drama (Minneapolis, 1916).

[1] LLL Trans., 1920, pp. 53-55; LW, XLI (1922), 162, 267.

[2] LW, XLI (1922), 316.

[3] LCA, VI (Jan. 1928).

[4] The two other members were a builder and an architectural engineer. LW, XLI (1922), 316.

churches built in the period, and for introducing and maintaining an uncompromising esthetic standard.

To illustrate his preference for proportions emphasizing height and length in relation to width, Webber assembled a large collection of photographs of English churches taken on trips to England to study church architecture.[1] Besides writing every issue of Lutheran Church Art, Webber contributed regular articles on church architecture to the American Lutheran throughout the Twenties and was influencial in the several church architecture issues of that magazine.[2]

These special issues were important artistically for the architecture proposed and sociologically for the writers contributing. Nationally known, non-Lutheran architects such as Ralph Adams Cram, E. Donald Robb, and J. W. C. Corbusier wrote articles for the American Lutheran.[3] This was one of the first times that a Missouri Synod periodical was ready to go outside of ethnic and denominational lines for authority. The willingness to do so, to test and accept the best that American architecture had to offer, demonstrated a new maturity in the Synod.

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[1] For admiring comment, see LW, XLVIII (1929), 244.

[2] VI (1923), 111-123; X (1927), 119-136. In 1927 Webber published Symbolic Church Art (Cleveland), an introduction and handbook on the subject.

[3] The 1923 issue received editorial commendation in the trade magazine Architecture. The article by Cram was quoted at length. "Toward Better Church Architecture," XLIV (Jan. 1924), 11.

There was no doubt about Webber's artistic enthusiasm for the Gothic style, but the receptivity of his audience was conditioned as well by the advantages of Gothic architecture at this stage of acculturation. Gothic style was ideal for the Missouri Synod congregation completing the transition from immigrant to American. A Gothic church could be satisfactorily expensive without being vulgar. It avoided features laughable to the German-American's non-Lutheran neighbors. The style was being used by the wealthier and more sophisticated American denominations and yet was conducive to the classic Lutheran liturgical heritage. To have something highly praised and used by American denominations and yet also soundly Lutheran was a rare treat for the Missouri Synod.

Hand in hand with a renaissance of architecture went changes in church practice as well as quickened interest in liturgics. When F. R. Webber's fictional St. Martin's church moved from the city to the suburbs, changes were soon noticed. "In the old church the men sat on the right and the women on the left. The men always went first to communion. In the old church honest old Hugo Mayers and corpulent Adam Schick had had no trouble in gathering the Sunday offering in two red velvet-alms-bags attached to five-foot poles. But all that was left behind. Men and women now sat together, and it required eight men, dressed in frock coats with silk lapels, to manipulate the four chiseled brass offering plates now in use."[1]

Undeniably, attention to liturgical matters was badly needed in the Missouri Synod, for pre-war practice had often paralleled church architecture. A typical German-American acolyte was "a fat church officer [who] walked up [to the altar] in squeaky shoes just before the Preface, scratched a kitchen match on his thigh and lighted the candles. As soon as all had received [Communion], he came up again and blew the candles out with his breath."[2]

The most visible improvement in liturgical matters was in the area of vestments.[3] In 1917 C. Abbetmeyer in a Witness series on public worship had flatly opposed the vested choir.[4] Yet, within the next decade, more and more congregations introduced robes for their choir.[5] Reported Webber in 1927, "we are receiving so many letters inquiring about the proper type of vestments for choirs that we cannot help wondering what has happened."[1]

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[1] WLM, XXXIV (1925), 25.

[2] Webber to author, Nov. 6, 1962. See also AL, VI (1923), 111 for contemporary corroboration.

[3] At St. Martin's congregation, whose fictional rise was chronicled by Webber in the Walther League Messenger, a visitor to the new church noticed that "the choir had been vested in black cassocks and white cottas, and . . . [director] Kleinhammer had been rigged out in similar attire, but with the addition of the bright colored hood which signified his standing in music and in the state chapter of the American Guild of Organists." XXXIV (1925), 25.

[4] LW, XXXVI (1917), 255.

[5] LW, XLVI (1927), 82; XLVII (1928), 27, 147; WLM, XXXV (1927), 444; AL, XI (1928), 430.

During the Twenties, too, writers repeatedly urged a more uniform use of the Lutheran Common Service with its set forms and chanted responses.[2] What success these recommendations had is impossible to say. Certainly, however, interest in liturgics and hymnody was increasing.[3] At the 1929 Synodical convention a committee was authorized to make a revision of the English hymnal published in 1912. The subsequent work was the most thorough effort in the Synod's history and provided a well-considered, large English hymnal.[4]

A strong emphasis on the music of Bach was connected with the liturgical interest. In the fall of 1925 a Lutheran Bach Choir was organized in Chicago. Its ultimate aim was the "popularizing of Bach's music among fellow-Lutherans and the restoration of this unmatchable treasure in the Lutheran Church Service."[5] Concerts, given in Chicago's Orchestra Hall, were well received. By 1928, Cleveland, Detroit, and

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[1] LCA, V (Jan. 1927). Webber credited the tours of the Norwegian Lutheran St. Olaf College choir as a catalyst. The choir, he said, wore "correct vestments, and not the strange attire seen in many churches."

[2] LW, XLIII (1924), 113; XLIV (1925), 222-223.

[3] See LW, XLIV (1925), 422; XLV (1926), 152. In 1926 W. G. Polack had a regular series in the Witness on various hymns and their history.

[4] W. G. Polack, The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal (CPH, 1942), pp. v-viii.

[5] LW, XLVI (1927), 194.

New York Lutherans had organized similar choirs.[1] At the same time Edward Rechlin, a gifted organist, aroused a new appreciation of Bach's organ music on his tours about the country.[2]

Such interest in the music of the German master, and especially the formation of Bach choirs seems at first glance an anomaly in the process of assimilation. But for the older generation, a generation which had seen the German immigrant community literally disintegrate in a decade, support for a Bach choir was a way of retaining, even after the language was gone, some vestige of the Old World. For younger Lutherans, a Bach choir was doubtless in part a return to German culture in search of roots they supposed their parents or grandparents had enjoyed. Bach was ideal for this: he was German, Lutheran (something not to be said of the German literary giants), and moreover, was highly praised by American critics.[3]

Progress in architecture and liturgics was far from uniform. Opposition to vestments remained strong.[4] Even in the late Twenties correspondents in the Lutheran Witness used "auditorium" when they meant nave.[1] In that same year a report of a church dedication proudly noted that the nave was equipped with the latest style of opera chairs.[2] As pictures in the Synod's periodicals testified, exceedingly ugly churches continued to be built throughout the Twenties. To the discomfiture of Webber and his colleagues, quite indifferent buildings received superlative praise in dedication reports (complete with pictures) sent in to the Witness and Lutheraner. Such praise, complained Webber, promoted wrong ideas about what was good in church architecture. "Cathedral-like" cannot be applied to any Synodical church, regardless of size, he pointed out; the Missouri Synod had no bishops to seat, and few of the churches were really all that big anyway.[3]

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[1] LW, XLVI (1927), 220; XLVII (1928), 257; DL, LXXXV (1929), 106.

[2] Rechlin's audience was wider than Missouri Synod Lutheranism, for he also toured Europe a number of times.

[3] Ironically, the younger generation, with its superior education and more sophisticated standards, heard more Bach and more in Bach than had the generation of immigrant farmers and craftsmen.

[4] LW, XLVII (1928), 74.

Important progress was nevertheless made and good publicity gained. Even the American Mercury reporter, writing on the Lutherans, commented upon it.[4] Exalted Webber in 1925, "for 76 long years, almost nothing from our circles ever appeared in architectural journals. . . . But, within 16 months, no less than five examples of Lutheran work, of our Synod, have appeared in the big eastern architectural journals, usually with fine, full-page illustrations. . . . We are improving. And even better things are soon to come."[1] Perhaps the surest sign of architectural progress and immigrant acculturation occurred in southern California. There, by the late Twenties, good German Lutheran chorales resounded through Missouri Synod churches built in detailed Spanish Mission architecture.[2]

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[1] XLVI (1927), 258.

[2] LW, XLVI (1927), 146.

[3] LW, XLIII (1924), 252; LCA, I (June 1922).

[4] Eldor Paul Schulze, "The Lutherans," VIII (July 1926), 316.

The most notable example of buildings fulfilling immigrant needs was not church construction, however, but the construction of the new St. Louis Concordia Seminary. The complete history of the new seminary, authorized in 1920 and dedicated in 1926, is a story in itself. Most of the details have little bearing on immigrant acculturation, but in many ways the new buildings reflected in microcosm the aims and aspirations of the Missouri Synod.

Much of the history of the new seminary had an element of allegory about it. The initial appropriation of one million dollars (an enormous sum to Missourians in 1920) set the theme to be worked out in subsequent events. There were no preliminary bids or even plans, nothing upon which to base an estimate. Why then a million dollars? Because that was the largest figure that occurred to an old German lay delegate at the 1920 convention who was tired of hearing,

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[1] LCA, IV (July 1925).

[2] LW, XLVII (1928), 141.

"Ich gew ooch fief Daler," when they collected for the Synod.[1] The appropriation was passed with hardly any discussion.[2]

A site was selected. Where was the main seminary to move after decades in the congested south St. Louis German community? To a seventy acre wooded tract on the outskirts of St. Louis, in the wealthiest residential suburb of the city. Near Forest Park, the impressive site of the 1904 World's Fair. Washington University was also close at hand, but descriptions rarely failed to note that the seminary land was higher ground than that of the university.[3] The building committee sent a delegation to inspect campus architecture. Where did they go? East, to the ivy-league schools, Princeton, Yale, Harvard. They returned with measurements of quadrangles, and the news that they were flatteringly received and that even non-Lutherans knew the Missouri Synod was building a new campus.[4]

An architect was chosen: not a Midwestern firm, but, from the East, Day and Klauder, of Philadelphia. A style was decided upon: not that of the brick horrors typical of Synodical schools--nor any architectural innovation--but

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[1] LW, XXXIX (1920), 222.

[2] LW, XXXIX (1920), 212.

[3] See, for example, Pro., 1923, 15.

[4] LW, XLI (1922), 83-84.

Gothic.[1] Funds were raised: a thousand dollars from one Indiana layman who was "tired of seeing only Methodist and Presbyterian colleges make a fine showing and ours look like barracks."[2] A single Milwaukee layman donated the whole library: ninety thousand dollars, a fifth of the 1917 Synodical budget.[3]

But when bids were let, yet another million and a half dollars was necessary. Opposition developed to the extra appropriation, but was crushed partly with the late news that the little Wisconsin Synod had voted half a million dollars for its new seminary.[4]

The dedication of the largest Lutheran seminary in America in 1926 brought the largest crowd in Synodical history. Special trains were run from Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Chicago, and Detroit. Some 75,000 proud Lutherans gathered to hear congratulations from public officials and speeches by Missouri Synod dignitaries. The occasion received extensive press coverage: the "Kaiser's church" of 1918 now praised in 1926. But more, the ceremonies were broadcast over radio and even filmed for motion pictures.[5] Completed, the seminary included a wealth of ornamentation and symbolism.[1] It received extensive pictorial coverage from the Architectural Record: an immigrant church in one of the leading trade journals of the country.[2]

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[1] LW, XLI (1922), 115. Graebner to Schaeffer, Feb. 11, 1923, TG 2.

[2] Memorandum, "Subscription Trip to Southern Indiana, Feb. 18-23, 1922," TG 66.

[3] LW, XLII (1923), 2.

[4] And by presenting an "alternate" plan that resembled prison architecture. LW, XLII (1923), 238. See alternate sketches filed at CHI under LLL, 1923.

[5] LW, XLV (1926), 211-212; Daily Record of Proceedings, July 11, 1926, p. 8.

And when in 1928, a group of architects meeting in St. Louis came out to inspect and praise the new campus, Graebner wrote to the other members of the building committee, "when they see the name Luther Tower and the Luther statue . . . they will all conclude that the Lutheran church is here for good and must be reckoned with. Am I right?"[3] He was right that when he, and countless other Missouri Synod clergy and laymen, saw the name Luther Tower and the Luther statue, then they knew, and knew others realized too, that the Missouri Synod was taking its place in America.

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[1] Theo. Graebner, Concordia Seminary (CPH, 1926).

[2] "Concordia Seminary, St. Louis," LXIV (Sept. 1928), 177-182, 199-224.

[3] May 19, 1928, TG 1. See also WLM, XXXIV (1926), 328, where W. A. Maier entitled an article blasting the pessimists in the Missouri Synod, "We Can." The title was superimposed on an aerial photo of the seminary.

CHAPTER VII

LAYMEN IN A CLERGY'S WORLD

From the beginnings of the Missouri Synod, the leading figures in the German-Lutheran immigrant society were the clergy.[1] Whether the pastor came over from Germany with his people or sought them out in the cities and on the frontier, the result was the same. Herr Pastor was the leader of the Lutheran immigrant community.[2] Of course, the ministry was a respected profession in Germany as well as in the United States. Theologically, Missouri Synod clergy had permanent tenure on the basis of a divine call. But most important was the immigrant situation.

In America the German-Lutheran faced new, often difficult situations; here, more than amid the comfortable familiarity of Germany, he was likely to turn to his pastor for guidance. Torn from other roots, the immigrant placed the more value on the assurances of religion his pastor offered. Unable to bring with him all that marked the cycle of life in his homeland, he attached the more importance to the basic ceremonies of life, baptism and marriage and burial. Correspondingly, the officiant at these acts--the officiant who performed them as was done in the old country--became the more valued and esteemed.

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[1] In its reaction from Stephan's hierarchical tendencies, the Synod early established a congregational polity which gave a large measure of potential control to the laity. However, in actual personal relationships the clergy's role is hard to over-estimate. For early polity, see Mundinger.

[2] Although there is no systematic study of the nineteenth century Missouri Synod pastor, *mutatis mutandis*, George Stephenson's discussion of the Augustana (Swedish-American) pastor is applicable. *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (Minneapolis, 1932), pp. 384-397. The discussion by Paul C. Nyholm, though less useful, covers similar ground for the Danish-American pastors. *The Americanization of the Danish Lutheran Churches in America* (Copenhagen, 1963), pp. 159-221.

The pastor, furthermore, presided over an institution that was specifically German, thus assisting the immigrant perpetuate his language and his Germanness in America. For those who lacked much formal schooling, the church and its forms embodied high German culture. Furthermore, the clergy usually had a much better education than the laity.[1] A high percentage of the Synod's founders were graduates of German universities. Even after this generation, the pastors retained a distinct educational advantage. To immigrant children, the pastor was teacher in school as well as preacher in church. He was capable of both corporeal and spiritual punishment; attitudes of respect toward lectern and pulpit reinforced each other. Because of the relative lack of specialization in professions, and because the adult immigrant preferred to take his problems to someone who could speak German, the minister consolidated his position by being counselor, lawyer, and doctor as well as pastor and teacher to his people. The more and varied cases he was called into, the greater grew his competence--and confidence--to advise and act in still other cases. Herr Pastor was not only willing and ready to guide his laity in many aspects of their lives, he was expected by his congregation to do so.

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[1] In 1934 the Synodical Conference (of which the Missouri Synod comprised about 80%) ranked fourth among all American denominations in percentage of pastors with both college and seminary training. It had the lowest percentage of clergy with neither college nor seminary education. Mark A. May, The Profession of the Ministry: Its Status and Problems (New York, 1934), p. 16.

The high status of the clergy, as well as the fact that preparation for the ministry (and teaching) was the only higher education offered within the Synod, helped attract the most promising boys into the ministry. The result was a self-perpetuating system. Because the ministry held a respected position, it attracted the best minds, who offered qualified leadership, thus adding to the stature of the ministry.[1]

The Missouri Synod clergy maintained its status in the German Lutheran community well into the twentieth century. As late as 1918 Captain Lester testified before a Senate committee, "the relationship between the German Lutheran clergyman and his congregation is exceedingly close. They are really pastors, almost in the literal sense. The members of their congregations go to them with every conceivable personal affair. They confide in them."[1]

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[1] Some of the damage done by the Depression of the Thirties was the reinforcement hard times gave to the development of other professions as alternatives to the ministry for young men in the Synod. Students were graduated with no positions open for them and little money to finance mission work. Some were forced into secular professions and, equally important, many potential students probably never began the theological course, but cast around instead for some other option.

Yet changes were inevitable as the immigrant community was gradually assimilated into American society. When the mysteries and hardships of life in the New World were overcome, religion did not have the same meaning it had for the newcomer. For the second or third generation, German Lutheranism and Herr Pastor were not the same vitally important links with the past. Some would say that the pastor was too old or not well trained to teach school, and would send their children to public school. Others would turn to the American community rather than to the parsonage for professional advice.

Most important, with the maturation of the immigrant community came increasing numbers of Missouri Lutheran laymen who were self-made, highly successful businessmen. These men were no longer penniless, somewhat confused immigrants willing, even anxious, to accept the omnicompetent leadership of the Lutheran pastor. Instead, these were men accustomed to exerting their own leadership in competitive circles. They inevitably tended to carry the same independent attitudes into church affairs.

The successful laity, being largely self-taught, were of a decidedly practical, rather than speculative, bent. They were thus unready to challenge the clergy's perogatives in theological matters. However, a high degree of acculturation and of business success led them to become increasingly unhappy about the Synod's fund raising. Once involved, the laymen broadened their assault on the clerical tradition to include all of the church's business matters. In this they were aided and abetted by ministers in the reform group. The result was far reaching change both in Synodical affairs and in lay attitudes.[1]

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[1] Brewing and Liquor Interests, p. 1788.

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Steadily mounting demands on the Missouri Synod's treasury in the pre-war period produced a deficit which rose higher every year. Late in 1914, A. G. Brauer, prominent St. Louis layman, attempted privately to raise $100,000 to cancel this debt. He was able to get only about twenty-eight thousand pledged, however, so he released the pledges.[1]

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[1] The rise of the Missouri Synod laity thus illustrates some of the points about the Catholic laymen made by Daniel Callahan:

> "a lay renaissance will depend upon lay leaders who have come to terms with the society in which they live--who have achieved some general social status and acceptance, some economic stability, some sense of identification with society. . . . any lay movement will show the effects of the layman's attempt to reconcile the demands made upon him by Church and society; it will reflect not only his dedication to the Church, but also the influence which the values of society have had upon him. . . . the freer the layman finds himself in society and the more integrated he is in the community, the more he will look for many of the same privileges within the Church." The Mind of the Catholic Layman (New York, 1963), pp. 77-78.

At the 1917 triennial convention held at Milwaukee, Edmund Seuel later recalled, Brauer was telling the story of his efforts to a small group of laymen when Theodore Lamprecht, a New York textile merchant, suggested another attempt be made at the convention. Under his initiative, a meeting of twelve wealthy and influential laymen was held one evening at the home of Fred C. Pritzlaff, a Milwaukee hardware wholesaler. Pledges were again solicited at the meeting and amounted to $26,000. A temporary organization was established with the alliterative name, Lutheran Laymen's League.[2] The league received official sanction from President Pfotenhauer and set out to reach its $100,000 goal.[3] In order not to affect regular contributions, it was emphasized that the LLL drive was aimed at individuals rather than congregations, and especially at wealthy members who could afford to give more.[4]

By December, 1917, the goal was reached. Instead of immediately disbanding, however, the league sought a new goal.[1] Immediately before the war some of the American denominations had raised large sums for their clerical pension funds. Very likely this was influential in the league's adoption of a $250,000 goal for the Synodical pension fund.[2] Permanent officers were elected and in June, 1918, Charles Cramer was hired as executive secretary. A membership and fund drive was pressed with more vigor.[3] To organize the effort properly, districts (usually coterminous with Synodical districts) were established, each with its own officials.[4]

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[1] A. H. Ahlbrand to Brauer, Feb. 18, May 5, May 27, 1915; Henry Horst to Brauer, Dec. 16, 1914, Dec. 10, 1915. See also Brauer to Graebner, Feb. 11, 1918, TG 78.

[2] W. G. Polack, "The Founding of the Lutheran Laymen's League . . . ," CHIQ, VI (April 1933), 1-11; LW, XLIV (1925), 165; DL, LXXIII (1917), 327. Officers of the new organization were Theodore Lamprecht, pres.; A. G. Brauer, sec.; Edmund Seuel, treas.

[3] DL, LXXIII (1917), 260.

[4] DL, LXXIII (1917), 260, 327; Pro., 1917, 57.

World War I itself had little impact on the league. But soon after the Armistice was signed, a meeting of league officers was called on short notice to discuss requesting donations of United States War Bonds. H. H. Zimmerman, an Illinois banker, had noticed that with the war over, German-Americans, particularly in rural areas, were getting rid of the bonds they had been partially coerced into buying; often the immigrants were taking losses in the process. He therefore suggested that the LLL present its cause as the proper recipient of the bonds.[1] By this time, too, other denominations had begun unprecedented drives with multimillion dollar goals.[2]

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[1] Already in October, 1917, Lamprecht referred to this drive as "the special purpose of this League for the year 1917." Circular letter, Oct. 2, 1917, LLL.

[2] The 1918 report of the Episcopalian pension fund remains in the LLL files, presumably acquired at that time. For denominational pension funds, see Luther P. Powell, "The Growth and Development of the Motives and Methods of Church Support with Special Emphasis upon the American Churches" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Drew Theological Seminary, 1951).

[3] Membership in June was 155; by October it had climbed to 428 in 22 states. In November and December, 1918, some 24,000 copies of a brochure on the LLL were mailed out. Executive secretary's reports, Oct. 8, 1918, Jan. 20, 1919, LLL.

[4] _LW_, XXXVII (1918), 412. For list of district and district leaders, see _LW_, XXXVII (1918), 380.

The meeting raised the previous goal of $250,000 to one of $3,000,000 as an endowment for the pension fund.[3] It also scheduled a meeting of district presidents and influential laymen for January 22, 1919 in order to whip up sentiment for the enlarged drive. The session with the district presidents was a great success and the league set to work with much enthusiasm. By May it had collected just over a third of its goal.[4] Thereafter the collections slowed, however; it was not until a year later that the second million was in.[1]

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[1] LLL Min., Dec. 15, 1918; H. H. Zimmerman to Graebner, June 17, 1925, TG 78. The idea had come up already several months earlier. Min., Oct. 9, 1918. For methods used during the war to "encourage" citizens to buy bonds, see Charles Stewart, "Prussianizing Wisconsin," Atlantic Monthly, CXXIII (Jan. 1919), 99-105.

The aversion to bonds may not have been entirely based on dislike of the American government. According to Theodore Eckhart most farmers had little experience with intangible assets and little faith in their investment, even when backed by the government. Interview, July 16, 1963.

[2] Sweet, p. 404; Olmstead, pp. 513-514.

[3] Min., Dec. 15, 1918.

[4] LW, XXXVIII (1919), 151. The league's time table had been unrealistic, calling for completion of the drive by mid-April. See schedule in Min., Jan. 31, 1919; DL, LXXV (1919), 38.

Whatever its financial results, the drive introduced the LLL to the Synod on a grand scale.[2] In doing so the league inaugurated a general movement by the laity toward a more active role in church life. Such a movement was quite in line with the thought of the twelve men who organized the league, for these twelve had moved far from the typical German immigrant pattern. Of the twelve, only two were born in Germany. By comparison, at this time at least half of the Synod's clergy were native Germans.[3] The low percentage of German birth among the league founders is all the more striking in view of the average age; ten of the twelve were over fifty. These men were not of the younger generation; rather, they were the sons of pre-Civil War German immigrants.[4] All of them were fluent in English. An indication of the linguistic acculturation in the group was its gross miscalculation in the 1919 endowment fund campaign; original plans called for almost no promotional material in German. As it turned out, nearly all of the literature had to be provided in both languages.[1]

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[1] As of April 17, 1920. LW, XXXIX (1920), 144.

[2] Theodore Graebner claimed that the two million dollars collected by 1920 was "the largest amount ever collected by any Lutheran body." LW, XXXIX (1920), 166.

[3] Estimated on the basis of the birthplace of pastors who died in the late Twenties and early Thirties, given in the necrology sections of the SYB.

[4] Some were even further removed from Germany than that. A. H. Ahlbrand, for one, was second generation American. Ahlbrand to L. Meyer, June 3, 1929, TG 80.

Reinforcing a longer exposure to American ways was business success. With the single exception of the treasurer of the Synod who was included among the twelve, all were wealthy men, quite at ease in business circles. In 1918 for example, when the league officials once met in St. Louis, they dined at the Missouri Athletic Club.[2] At least three of the men vacationed during the winter at Miami;[3] another made trips to Europe and took an extended world tour. Ten of the twelve were entirely self-made men, or headed family companies begun by their fathers. At least four of the twelve had considerable political experience. Finally, five of the twelve were enough a part of the clerical establishment not to be unduly awed by it. Two had completed a theological education at the St. Louis seminary; a third had broken off in prep school. One was trained as a parochial school teacher; another came from a family which consistently produced ministers.

The formation of the LLL was thus based upon a group of men capable and willing to spend substantial amounts of time and money on church work, and by training and experience unready to grant the clergy automatic leadership in other than theological affairs.[1]

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[1] Min. (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 2.

[2] Min., June 3, 1918, p. 2.

[3] LW, XLIII (1924), 286.

Whether the Synod could have produced such a group much before 1917 is doubtful. But by that year, there were such men in the Synod, they were in attendance at the Synodical convention, and they had the experience of Brauer's fund raising attempt behind them. According to league president Lamprecht, the final catalyst for the evening meeting in Milwaukee was provided by pessimistic speeches at the convention. The speeches were made, Lamprecht specified, by certain pastors.[2] Such evidences of clerical gloom (caused by the Synod's debt and by American entry into the war) at what was supposed to be a festive convention so alienated these laymen from clerical leadership that they were ready for independent, extra-Synodical action.

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[1] The above generalizations are based on information in biographical sketches given in John T. Mueller, "The Story of the Lutheran Laymen's League" (typescript, 1948), pp. 7-62. The twelve men, their residence, and primary activity are given below. Almost all of the twelve ultimately moved into other business activities on the basis of their wealth. A. H. Ahlbrand (Seymour, Ind.; buggy manufacturer and auto salesman); John W. Boehne (Evansville, Ind.; stove manufacturer, Congressman); Benjamin Bosse (Evansville, Ind.; furniture manufacturer, mayor); August G. Brauer (St. Louis; wholesale supplier); Henry Horst (Rock Island, Ill.; born in Germany; construction company); Theodore H. Lamprecht (New York City; woolen goods); Robert H. Leonhardt (St. Louis; textile manufacturer); John A. Leschen (St. Louis; rope manufacturer); H. August Luedke (Milwaukee; born in Germany; associated with Pritzlaff, see below); Fred C. Pritzlaff (Milwaukee; hardware supply house); William E. Schlake (Chicago; brick manufacturer); Edmund Seuel (St. Louis; Concordia Publishing House manager and treasurer of the Missouri Synod).

[2] LW, XLIV (1925), 165.

The post-war endowment fund drive demonstrated the potential enthusiasm of the laity for a specifically laymen's activity and goal within the Synod. However, once past the first flush of this enthusiasm, the LLL had difficulty maintaining interest. Much of the league's history during the Twenties was a search for another goal which would focus the dissatisfaction and ambition of the laity as had that of 1919.

That lay zeal faded so quickly after 1920 was not entirely the league's fault. The LLL was forced to suspend its efforts to complete the endowment fund because of a Synodical decision in 1920 to raise large amounts for a new St. Louis seminary. Though league officials stressed that other good works awaited it,[1] and LLL members took an active part in this first seminary campaign, the league was no longer working for a lay-inspired goal. General membership dropped from 12,447 in 1920 to 3,614 in 1921.[2] It became necessary to retrench in expenses and personnel.[3] A wind-up campaign for the endowment fund was scheduled for spring, 1923, but once again the LLL stepped aside to help the lagging seminary fund drive begun in 1920.[4]

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[1] Theo. Lamprecht to Wm. Schlake, Dec. 10, 1920, LLL; Min., Nov. 3, 1920.

[2] Membership table in Min., Oct. 27, 1926.

[3] Min., Sept. 25-26, 1922, pp. 1-2.

[4] A decision which was openly regretted by the time of the June convention. See Lamprecht's opening address, LLL Pro., 1923, 4.

So much of the league's original spontaneity had been lost by 1923 that a membership and organization committee was thought necessary.[1] The committee noted that the endowment fund drive had become stale. A popular goal had to be found if the LLL was to increase its membership and revenue.[2] This point was reiterated with particular force in 1926. In that year, with the seminary building campaign finally completed, the league was at last able to continue its own drive begun in 1919. The attempt, however, was a conclusive failure. Two-thirds of the congregations did not even request promotional material for the drive.[3]

In this failure the league faced its most powerful mandate for change. The year 1926 was almost necessarily a turning point in the league's history. When the LLL board of directors met in June, they voted to discontinue future efforts for the endowment fund.[4] The question, then, was what goal to adopt. In February, 1926, the LLL executive committee had decided to make a collection for the Church Extension Fund its next target.[5] However, when the various mission boards petitioned the Synod for the "Forward Movement for Missions" in the 1926-1929 triennium, the LLL decided not to duplicate their efforts.[1] Strong sentiment already existed in favor of making KFUO the league's major project and the mission boards' action cleared the way for such a move.[2] The league assumed full support for the St. Louis radio station.[3]

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[1] Min., Mar. 1, 1925, p. 6.

[2] Min., April 5, 1924, p. 2. These sentiments had been expressed as early as 1922. Min., Sept. 25, 1922, p. 4.

[3] Min., May 19, 1926; LLL directors Min., June 6, 1926.

[4] Min., June 6, 1926.

[5] Min., Feb. 5, 1926, p. 3.

The year was transitional also in personnel. Theodore Lamprecht, president of the LLL since its founding, chose not to stand for re-election and Edwin H. Faster was elected president of the organization. Faster was only thirty-four at the time of his election and, though active, had not achieved great prominence in either business or Synodical circles. His election marked another step in the maturation of the laity in America. The original impetus for lay independence and initiative had come from laymen who because of their position and wealth commanded respect in both Synodical and American society. Once such men had successfully taken the initiative, the younger generation, making up in American attitude what it lacked in prestige, could continue to press for greater lay activity.

KFUO was not, however, really a Synod-wide project as had been the endowment fund campaign. The future of the league was still far from secure. In the fall of 1927, Treasurer Pritzlaff reported that for the first time the LLL was operating with a deficit.[1] In the earlier days of the LLL, matters of budget had been relatively unimportant; in 1927, for the first time, serious consideration had to be given to the annual budget for the coming year. The league had yet to strike the formula necessary for a highly successful laymen's organization.

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[1] Executive comm. Min., June 6, 1926, p. 2.

[2] Min., Feb. 5, 1926.

[3] That the move was anticipated well in advance is indicated by invitations to Walter A. Maier to keynote the LLL convention and to J. H. C. Fritz to speak during the proceedings. Fritz had already presented the cause of KFUO at a May meeting. LLL Min., May 19, 1926, p. 3. Maier aroused such enthusiasm by his address that he was asked to speak a second time. LLL *Pro*., 1926, 15.

In the end the LLL returned to local societies, a plan it had earlier rejected. Metropolitan branch organizations had been begun in some cities already in late 1918;[2] however, the LLL soon drew back from such a structure. The stated purpose of the league was a broad, undefined one: to aid the Synod "in word and deed." But the whole orientation of the group of men who founded the league and dominated its early life was limited to financial affairs. The league was in existence to raise money for the Synod and to encourage (and pressure) the Synod itself into more efficient fund-raising on all levels. The league retreated from local societies for fear that with the proliferation of local groups would come a proliferation of local projects, thus diverting the league from its original purpose.

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[1] The executive committee felt it unwise to publish such an unhappy financial statement in either the Witness or the Lutheraner, as had been customary. Min., Dec. 20, 1927.

[2] Executive secretary's report, Jan. 20, 1919; LW, XXXVII (1918), 412.

These fears grew out of the experience the LLL had with local organizations in Cleveland and in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In Cleveland, some laymen, believing that the congregations there were departing from conservative Lutheranism, attempted to use the city LLL organization to rectify this development. This was quickly condemned by Synodical leaders in St. Louis as contrary to the Synod's congregational polity. The laymen were free to criticize in theological matters, but when doing so they were to work from within the congregations rather than through the league.[1]

In Fort Wayne, the situation was more complicated. Laymen in that city, motivated by loyalty to the German language and by zeal for the parochial school, reacted strongly to the Indiana law against German in the elementary schools. What began as a local of the LLL was changed into an essentially political organization. Pressure was put on the LLL to join in such activity or at least to allow the use of its name. The LLL was told quite pointedly that the Fort Wayne organization, with its dues at only one dollar, would undercut the LLL, with its membership of six dollars. The league nevertheless stood by its original purposes strictly interpreted and the Fort Wayne group emerged shortly as the American Luther League.[1]

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[1] See corr. between C. M. Zorn, Jr. and Graebner, May 13-July 30, 1919, TG 78.

With this experience, the Lutheran Laymen's League backed away from branch affiliates. And during the first half of the Twenties, it consistently turned down proposals that it reorganize, or amalgamate with the American Luther League, the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, or the National Lutheran Education Association. Even tentative proposals of a loose liaison to keep these organizations aware of each other's activities did not get very far.[2]

By the later Twenties, however, both the league and its environment had changed. The founders of the league were mainly older, wealthy men, and at least some of them viewed the league as a channel for their church philanthropy. By the last years of the decade younger men without much wealth, and correspondingly less interest in using the league for large donations, were coming to the fore.[3] President Edwin Faster was a case in point. In 1929 he told the

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[1] For a review of LLL-ALL relations, and for candid views by LLL members, see LLL Transcript, Nov. 7, 1919, pp. 5-10. For a history of the American Luther League, see Erwin F. Vonderlage, "Saving the Private Schools: A Study of Pressure Group Influence on State Referenda in Michigan and Oregon" (unpublished Master's thesis, Washington University, 1958). (This master's thesis is partly reprinted in "The Michigan Storm Center in the School Question," CHIQ, XXXV [April 1962], 37-44; and "The American Luther League," CHIQ, XXXVI [July 1963], 33-42.)

[2] LLL Pro., 1923, 25; A. A. Grossman to Theo. Lamprecht, Mar. 19, 1923, LLL; LLL Min., April 11-12, 1924, p. 6; Graebner to Lamprecht, Mar. 28, 1925, TG 78.

[3] Directors in 1928 complained for the first time of having to pay their own expenses to attend board meetings. Min., Mar. 9, 1928, p. 4.

LLL convention, "no organization within the confines of the Church can hope to exist for any length of time if its sole purpose is to raise money."[1] Furthermore, particularly as Missouri Synod Lutherans moved to the suburbs,[2] congregational men's clubs became increasingly popular.[3] In fact, the men's club movement was so far advanced that federations on metropolitan or state bases were already entrenched in 1929 and the LLL had a hard time asserting its somewhat tardy leadership.[4] Finally, the LLL had the example of the Walther League, which was based on local societies, and had proved itself a rousing success.

In March, 1928, the LLL board of directors decided to consider reorganization; a committee was appointed and set to work. The upshot was that the 1929 LLL convention approved a new constitution which allowed group memberships of congregational men's clubs and lowered these group memberships to two dollars per individual.[1] The same 1929 convention also elected officers under the new constitution. The result was almost to complete the replacement of original officers with new, usually younger, men.

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[1] LW, XLVIII, 241.

[2] Wrote H. P. Douglass in 1924, "the outstanding peculiarity of the suburban church is . . . its great number of subsidiary organizations." Suburban Trend, p. 207.

[3] Of principal denominations, the Missouri Synod ranked sixth in number of males per hundred females. (Of the top ten denominations, seven were Lutheran.) Religious Bodies: 1926, I, 19. In the Walther League Messenger, Maier reported that according to a survey of two hundred Missouri Synod churches, "the average of 43% male attendance rises to almost 49 per cent in those churches which encourage men's organizations." XXXVII (1929), 457.

[4] Lutheran Laymen's League Bulletin [hereafter cited Bull.], I (1930), 38. For an explanation of the reasons for reorganizing the LLL, see Bull., I (1930), 105.

The reorganization of the LLL in 1929 lacked the spontaneity and lay independence which characterized the league's founding in 1917. In large part this was because the reorganization was not entirely inspired and directed by the laity. Four "pastoral advisers" served on the committee which recommended the reorganization; one of these was the executive secretary of the committee.[2] Not surprisingly, the headquarters of the league was to be moved from Milwaukee to St. Louis. The new constitution provided, moreover, that the LLL board of governors should include two members appointed by the Synodical Board of Directors. One of the two was to be a pastor.[1]

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[1] The original committee appointed in 1929 consisted of A. G. Brauer, L. F. Volkman, and A. H. Ahlbrand. Min., Mar. 9, 1928, p. 4; June 17-18, 1929. However, sometime in the next twelve months, the committee was drastically augmented. There was disagreement among league officials about the wisdom of reorganization. Matters took an unhappy turn at the board of directors meeting on March 20, 1929. Without a quorum present, the reorganization was recommended to the league and word sent out that the directors had so acted. For Executive Secretary Cramer, who opposed reorganization anyway, this action was the last straw and he resigned. Min., April 26, 1929. At a meeting on June 16, 1929, the board, with quorum present, made official the earlier action. Min., June 17-18, 1929. Unfortunately, the minutes of the meetings in late 1928 and early 1929 are missing from the LLL records--the only major gap in all of the Twenties.

[2] The pastors were Lawrence Meyer, Walter A. Maier, Richard Kretzschmar, and Theodore Graebner. Today's Challenge and Tomorrow's Opportunity (CPH, n.d. [1929]), p. 24.

With Pastor Lawrence Meyer as executive secretary of the reorganization committee and Theodore Graebner as editor of the league's new Bulletin, clergymen were serving in the most central positions of a layman's organization. In the fall of 1929, the LLL employed still another pastor, Louis Buchheimer, Jr., as field secretary. For executive secretary, the league also turned to candidates from the ministry, but suspended the search after several calls had been declined. As a second field secretary the LLL settled on T. G. Eggers, a former parochial school teacher.[2]

The growing number of clergymen directing the league was not necessarily a subversive infiltration. The pastoral advisors of the reorganization committee were all more or less members of the reform group within the Synod, a group in many ways the equivalent among the clergy of the LLL among the laity. Furthermore, the league faced genuine recruitment problems if it limited its search for executives to the laity. Laymen of the proven capabilities needed by the league would probably not find LLL positions sufficiently remunerative.[3] The clergy, however, were committed to work in the church and did so at relatively low salaries. The league could thus more easily locate an aggressive pastor with executive abilities who would serve the LLL. Nevertheless, it is true that there is no record in the LLL minutes of a serious search for laymen to assume the ongoing leadership and administration of the league. The LLL was saved from almost certain extinction partly by transfusions of clerical blood, but the process introduced elements foreign to the original body.

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[1] Constitution of the Lutheran Laymen's League (CPH, 1929), p. 5.

[2] Min., Feb. 26, 1930.

[3] Graebner made the same point in a discussion of candidates for the proposed office of Synodical publicity director. Graebner to J. H. C. Fritz, April 10, 1923, TG 69.

Yet, even such a thorough rehauling did not insure success for the league. The LLL had difficulty convincing men's clubs that it did not mean to replace or dominate them. In a complete switch from a decade earlier, the league now had to assure men's clubs that it had "no thought of interfering with their local projects."[1] The LLL also had some trouble persuading men's clubs of the advantages included with league membership. Nearly a year after the reorganization, the field secretary had to report, "the LLL reorganization plan does not seem to be meeting with the general acceptance which its program rightly deserves. . . . I firmly believe that the LLL at present stands in need of a concrete national objective."[2]

For such an objective, the league turned once again to radio. In 1927 the LLL had treated with suspicion and hostility an American Lutheran Publicity Bureau plan to erect radio stations overseas.[1] But by late 1929, the idea of broadcasting a Lutheran program on a network basis received serious consideration. In November the KFUO radio committee delegated Fritz and Maier to confer with network officials in New York.[2] Without mentioning this resolution, the league's Bulletin of that same month suggested to the membership the possibility of network broadcasting.[3] Fritz and Maier reported in December that they had done nothing because there were no funds in sight to support such a network arrangement.[4] Early in 1930, though, Maier went to New York City and was assured of a network broadcast contract, provided time was purchased at commercial rates.[5]

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[1] Bull., I (1930), 38.

[2] Min., April 25, 1930.

Here, then, was a major project of national scope; the league would sponsor network broadcasting, and network broadcasting would attract members to the league. When the LLL convention met late in May, 1930, ratification of the proposal was a foregone conclusion. Work went forward for collecting the $100,000 to support national broadcasting.[6]

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[1] Min., Feb. 25, 1927, p. 2; BdD Min., 270223E.

[2] Radio comm. Min., Nov. 15, 1929, KFUO office. Much of the impetus for this move came apparently from W. A. Maier and station manager H. H. Hohenstein. See Paul Maier, pp. 110-115.

[3] I (1929), 28.

[4] Radio comm. Min., Dec. 20, 1929, KFUO office.

[5] Maier, p. 112.

[6] Bull., I (1930), 97-100; Min., April 25, 1930.

With Walter A. Maier as regular speaker, the first "Lutheran Hour" series began on October 2, 1930.[1] The pattern for the Lutheran Laymen's League was then set: an organization based on congregational men's clubs, with its chief project a gradually expanding network of religious broadcasting.

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Once given leadership and an example, a significant part of the Synod's laymen were not willing to continue unmodified the old attitude toward the clergy. Many laymen were caught between the recognition that the local pastor was the key to the congregation, and the conviction that they as laymen did not really need the clergy for church fund raising and business affairs, that in fact they as laymen could do a better job. "My own experience has been, if I could just get in contact with ordinary people instead of working through the Pastors I could always enthuse them and get results," wrote Ahlbrand to Brauer.[2]

The attempts, however limited, to change the relationship between the clergy and laity inevitably provoked friction between the two groups. The laymen's impatience stemmed from three main irritants: clerical inefficiency, extreme clerical conservatism, and clerical unwillingness to give the laymen an active part in initiating and carrying through various projects.

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[1] Because of the financial stringency caused by the Depression, this first series lasted only one season; the "Lutheran Hour" returned to the air, however, in 1935, and has been regularly broadcast since then under LLL sponsorship.

[2] May 27, 1915, TG 78. The depth of feeling on the matter in the league generally was demonstrated in the spontaneous statements of experience and opinion which repeatedly interrupted debate at the 1920 LLL convention. See Trans., 1920.

The organization of the league in 1917 was itself an indictment of the clergy's inefficiency. The reason the Synod is in debt, said the laymen, is because the people have not been properly informed by their pastors.[1] In October, 1918, the executive secretary of the league reported with unrestrained surprise that after two months barely one-eighth of the pastors had replied to a request for certain information.[2] A Cleveland layman noted in 1919 that he had frequently been asked during the endowment fund drive, "how are you going to tie it [the endowment fund] up . . . so those fool preachers don't spill the beans and spoil all the work we have done?"[3] Reported a pastor after attending the 1920 LLL convention: "Some of the men seem to think that now since the laymen have . . . taken hold of the finances and other business matters of the church, the pastor can take a back seat. Some one has hinted, the reason why the finances of the church in the past have often been in deplorable condition was due to the fact that the pastors are poor financiers."[4]

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[1] LW, XLIV (1925), 165.

[2] Executive secretary's report, Oct. 8, 1918, p. 2.

[3] Trans., 1919, p. 14.

[4] AL, III (1920), 96.

Equally exasperating to the laity were the limited horizons of the clergy. "I have almost lost heart in trying to induce the Pastors to systematize matters and get out of the old channel," wrote Ahlbrand in 1915.[1] The Lutheran Witness noted that the difference between lay and clergy delegates at the 1917 convention was the financial courage possessed by the former and lacking in the latter.[2] The laymen felt they had good cause to be impatient when they were opposed by pastors even during the 1919 campaign in behalf of the clergy's pension fund. From what wing of the clergy the opposition came is indicated by Louis Volkman's exhortation, "if you cannot get it into them in English, or in German, then, by Jove, talk low Dutch to them, and that is the only way you can do it."[3] A great deal was summed up by one speaker at a 1919 LLL meeting: in an "organization that has from its very infancy been run on a policy of economy, as has no other organization that has ever been organized, . . . when we had the nerve to come out here and talk about $3,000,000 [,] it absolutely broke the backbone of half the ministerial force of the church. Half of them are scared to death and they haven't got over it yet."[1]

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[1] Ahlbrand to Brauer, May 27, 1915, TG 78.

[2] XXXVI (1917), 212. The same was said after the 1923 convention. See Lamprecht's circular letter, May 4, 1924, TG 78.

[3] Trans., 1920, p. 78. Said Oliver Harms, "we must let the old Germans know what our aims are." Min. (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 13.

The most important complaint of the laymen was the hesitancy of some pastors to delegate authority and to permit autonomous activity. The rule, "the minister makes everything his business," is especially true among the older German congregations, one writer complained. "I daily come in contact with prominent Lutherans . . . who would gladly take hold of the business end of our church, but who continually cry, 'How can we do anything, when they [the pastors] do not give us anything to do.'"[2]

The situation was complicated by disagreement over the relationships between the league, the Synod, and the local congregation. The Missouri Synod theoretically operated under a modified type of federal structure, with the local congregation as the basic unit and source of power. In regard to the congregations, the districts and the Synod possessed only expressly delegated authority. Even in form, the LLL did not fit very neatly into this sort of power structure. Moreover, the aggressive attitude of laymen who wanted to get things done clashed with the reservations both of Synodical officials concerned with proper channels and of local pastors jealous of their autonomy.

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[1] Speaker unidentified, Trans., Nov. 6, 1919, p. 19. Not surprisingly, the laity reacted enthusiastically to plans to provide funds so that prospective Synodical professors could attend secular universities for more training. The laymen were quite explicit that many of the college and seminary faculties had become too inbred. Trans., 1920, pp. 140-150; LLL Pro., 1923, 26, 32.

[2] Letter fragment, W. H. Buchholz to "My dear editor," n. d. [1917-1924], TG 61. Complaints about the unreadiness of the clergy to accept the help or suggestions of laymen came also from the Cleveland area. C. M. Zorn, Jr. to Graebner, corr., May 13-July 30, 1919, TG 78.

These differences were focused particularly by the league's fund raising activity.[1] In its endowment fund campaign in 1919, the LLL sent out questionnaires for information on congregations. This was viewed by some as an infringement of congregational integrity; the fear was expressed that the league was trying to control the Synod.[2] President Pfotenhauer was deeply concerned about the league usurping rights of the Synod or of the congregations and warned the LLL several times against such action.[3] In a discussion of the clergy's attitude in 1922, the most positive statement Lamprecht could make was that more than half of the district presidents favored the LLL.[4] As late as 1926 the chairman of the organization and membership committee had to admit that "we have not yet succeeded in selling the L.L.L. to the majority of our pastors."[5]

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[1] Even though the league, up to its KFUO sponsorship, at any rate, turned all money collected directly over to the Synod.

[2] Min. (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 10.

[3] Secretary's Report, July 10, 1919, p. 15; Min., Feb. 11, 1921; see also Min. (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 2. In general, though, the Synod's president actively supported the league; in 1919 he wrote a general letter to all pastors in the Synod, asking for cooperation in the endowment fund drive. Min., Jan. 28, 1919.

[4] Hearing such information, John Boehne bluntly remarked that general changes in the officials of the Synod would be very beneficial. Min. (first draft), May 24, 1922, p. 9.

[5] Min., Oct. 27, 1926, p. 5.

As the Synod became increasingly well organized and sophisticated in fund raising during the later Twenties, the LLL had less occasion to press controversial suggestions on that subject. It was thus less resented by local pastors who thought they saw legalism in the league's methods. The reorganization of the LLL on a congregational men's club basis also made it more palatable; the pastor was no longer threatened by a Synodical organization drawing members from his congregation. Instead, he could sit in on the meetings of his local society. Finally, on the national level, clergymen were much more prominent in official capacities in the reorganized league.

Probably not all of the friction between the clergy and laity was healthy. Yet, in the end, the attitude of the laymen which helped produce difficulties with the clergy also did a great deal to revitalize the Synod. The criticisms of the laymen had a way of providing their own solution. Lay attacks on clerical incompetence in business affairs helped bring to the fore clergy interested in and capable of efficient administration. The LLL statements that the laity was inactive and ignorant of its duties and potential were answered in part by the league's own activity and publicity. At varying rates of speed, the clergy learned the benefits of active, aggressive laymen, and the laymen learned that some pastors shared their concern and even their aptitude for organization and administration.

The activities of the league played an important part in developing lay self-consciousness during the Twenties. "Our laymen have at last found their voice," commented the Witness.[1] With a goal ahead of them and an organization behind them, some laymen became active leaders almost in spite of themselves. To the laughter and applause of his colleagues, one layman at the 1920 convention told of his experience raising money in his congregation for the endowment fund:

> I have never talked much before the public. I went to my minister and asked him to prepare me a kind of speech that I should make to his congregation. He did, and he made me a good one. . . . My heart was beating when I was in front of that congregation, gentlemen. There were a lot of German people there so it was half English and half German. I took the English hymn book and I opened it and the first song I came to was, 'What a friend we have in Jesus.' I said that is my song. . . . After the hymn, I just talked. What I talked, I do not know.[2]

As another layman put it, "this movement has developed men in our organization right along. It is making a concrete and crystallized body."[3]

At least until its reorganization, the league seems to have been composed mostly of the more substantial businessmen. The LLL thus put into contact with each other men of similar social status and opinion from congregations all over the country. When the Synod was generally lower-middle and middle-middle class in social composition, it was especially important to provide a society of equals for those laymen of greater affluence. Making men of comparable means and abilities aware of each other was most likely to spur them to gifts of time and money commensurate with their endowments. The LLL not only made such men aware of each other, but offered the single outlet restricted to laymen for such contributions of money and talent. By doing so, the league drew men progressively further into church work, deepening their interest and broadening their commitment.[1]

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[1] XXXIX (1920), 133.

[2] Hillman, quoted in Trans., 1920, p. 87.

[3] Reller, quoted in Trans., 1920, p. 91.

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In the period between 1917 and 1929, the most important tangible indication of the increase in lay activism was the phenomenal rise in money collected within the Missouri Synod. As the Synod's constituency rose socially and economically before World War I, their church contributions had not kept pace with their greater affluence. Measured economically, Missouri Synod acculturation lagged behind even that of its individual members.

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[1] The possibility that the league would increase the attachment of its members to their church was especially useful, for the wealthier laymen were probably the most prone to defect to the Episcopalians.

The impact of the Lutheran Laymen's League on the adult men was probably much the same as that of the Walther League on the young people, as noted in 1920:

> "Many of our young people, especially those from smaller congregations, think of their Lutheran Church only in terms of their own local congregations, and imagine it to be a weak and struggling church body. In consequence, they sometimes feel ashamed of the outward appearance their church presents to others. . . . However, if the young people get out, attend conventions, see larger churches, meet the representatives of 30,000 fellow-Lutherans and see that these also are true to their faith and loyal to their Church, they are bound to return home with renewed enthusiasm and with gratitude toward God for having led them into the Lutheran Church. They are proud of belonging to a church-body that boasts of such young people, and at home they will show new interest in matters pertaining to the congregation, the society, and the Kingdom of God in general. In short, they will become better Lutherans." WLM, XXVIII (1920), 267-268.

The same argument was made in 1914 to encourage parochial school teachers to attend a proposed national conference. LSJ, XLIX, 187.

The league's contribution in this aspect of assimilation was decisive and may be divided into two parts. The first was the example and experience provided by the league's drive to raise a three million dollar endowment for the Synodical pension fund. The second consisted in concrete recommendations regarding the regular efforts to secure money for the Synod's annual operating budget.[1]

The first major financial drive in the Missouri Synod was not, however, the league-initiated effort for the endowment fund, but was instead a direct result of World War I, the drive by the Synodical Board for Army and Navy. Faced with the enormous task of providing spiritual care for Missouri Synod soldiers and sailors, the board was forced to delegate a special committee to raise money.[2] The committee settled on a method new in Synodical circles. After distributing a large amount of promotional literature, it set aside the Sunday afternoon of September 29, 1918 as the time for every congregation in the Synod to approach each of its members for a donation.[1] The cause was a popular one and the campaign quite successful. By the close of the war, the board had raised a total of $560,000.[2]

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[1] The second contribution is discussed in Chapter VIII.

[2] Officers of the board were W. C. Kohn, chairman; his nephew, F. C. Streufert, secretary; F. Wolff, treasurer. On the finance committee were J. M. Bailey, chair.; Theodore Eckhart, sec.; E. T. Lams, K. G. Schlerf, and Herman W. Meyer. LSSB, II (Mar. 1919), 3, 7. Kohn was director of the Synod's Concordia Teachers College at River Forest, Ill.; Wolff and Eckhart were laymen, and the rest Chicago pastors.

At the time half a million dollars was a very substantial sum in the Missouri Synod. Excluding special collections, total Synodical receipts in 1917 were only $575,000.[3] After three years of effort, a "Jubilee Fund" to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation barely reached $300,000 in 1918.[4] The board's success was the more striking because its drive was conceived and executed in a comparatively short time by men with very little, if any, previous experience in fund raising, and with a minimum of publicity in the official periodicals of the Synod. However, as necessary as the money was to the board, two factors in the drive were more important in the long range history of the Synod than the absolute total. The drive demonstrated that the financial resources of the Synod were considerable. Furthermore, the board could boast of the experience of managing a large-scale, concentrated financial campaign. No one else--pastor, layman, or official--in all of the Missouri Synod of 1918 could make such a claim.

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[1] The technique was novel enough that the Witness followed the announcement of it with a justification of the method. XXXVII (1918), 265.

[2] "Report of the Lutheran Church Board for Army and Navy . . . to February 1st, 1919," filed at CHI under LLL, 1923.

[3] SYB, 1917, 189.

[4] DL, LXXIV (1918), 72. While no official goal had been set for this drive, there had been talk of reaching a million dollars. DL, LXXIII (1917), 259; LW, XXXVI (1917), 211.

When the LLL campaign committee[1] was ready in late January, 1919 to appoint a manager for its three million dollar drive, it thus had immediately at hand a complete apparatus.[2] The committee appointed W. C. Kohn, head of the Army and Navy Board, as its campaign manager; Kohn, in turn, named as assistants his colleagues from the board's drive, Pastors F. C. Streufert and J. M. Bailey, and Theodore Eckhart.[3] The league bought the equipment and lease of the Board for Army and Navy and another campaign began.[4]

The tone of the whole campaign was set in the letter of appointment by Lamprecht to Kohn. Wrote the LLL president, "you nor we, of course, wish to spend money unnecessarily, but we also are emphatic in authorizing you to spare no necessary expense."[1] The campaign conducted was as unprecedented in the Missouri Synod as its goal. Kohn acted as overall administrator; Streufert served as correspondent to key officials. Besides writing many of the tracts, Bailey's chief contribution, as in the preceding campaign, was a meticulous and extremely detailed schedule for the drive; Eckhart served as office manager. A clerical force of as high as sixteen to eighteen secretaries worked in two shifts; six printers were engaged to handle the large volume of material.[2] Ultimately, nearly three and a half million pieces of literature, divided among ninety items, were sent out.[3] Aside from circular letters to officials and pastors, the publicity literature was composed of a weekly bulletin sent for five weeks to each congregation for distribution to every member, a worker's booklet, a speaker's handbook, and suggested sermons to pastors.[4] A special column, combining exhortation and reporting was devoted to the LLL in the Witness.[1] The American Lutheran published a special LLL number for the drive.[2] Never in the Missouri Synod's history had it seen a campaign of these dimensions.

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[1] Lamprecht, Horst, Brauer. Min., Jan. 20-21, 1919, p. 7.

[2] See Graebner to C. M. Zorn, Jr., Feb. 11, 1919, TG 78.

[3] Pastor Karl Schlerf, another member of the Army and Navy Board, was later appointed to succeed Rev. Richard Jesse as editor of the LLL drive column in the Lutheran Witness. Lamprecht to Graebner, July 12, 1920, TG 78.

[4] As Theodore Eckhart recalled, to change jobs he simply walked across the office. Interview, July 16, 1963.

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[1] Quoted in Min., Jan. 27, 1919; italics in original. The whole approach to money by the league was in striking contrast to that traditional in the Synod; one has only to recall here the complaints of the Synodical War-Time Bureau, quoted on p. 79. The league, for instance, paid the expenses of the district presidents who attended the January 22 meeting. LW, XLIV (1925), 202.

[2] Trans., 1920, p. 9; LW, XLIV (1925), 233, 266; Interview with Eckhart, July 16, 1963. These figures apply only to the Chicago campaign headquarters; at the Milwaukee league offices, to which the contributions were sent, fifteen to twenty people were kept busy tabulating results.

[3] Min., May 23, 1919 in Secretary's Report, July 10, 1919.

[4] AL, III (1920), 43. Copies of almost all of this material is filed at CHI, under LLL.

The campaign schedule called for an intensive effort in February and March with the final collection to occur, as in the board's campaign previously, in an "every-member canvass" of all congregations on Sunday afternoon, March 30.[3] In organization, the drive carefully adhered to Synodical structure to assure maximum personal distribution of information and enthusiasm. Following the district presidents' meeting on January 22, each president met with the leaders, or visitors, of the circuits in his district.[4] These visitors in turn met with representatives of the congregations in their circuits. Pressure was brought to bear where necessary to hold districts to this schedule. For instance, when the North Wisconsin District wanted to hold off until the fall, the LLL responded characteristically by having Benjamin Bosse get in touch with the president of that district at his home by telephone--not the normal means of long distance communication at the time.[1]

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[1] See Graebner to Theo. Lamprecht, Jan. 24, 1919, TG 78.

[2] March, 1919. Forty-five thousand extra copies were mailed. AL, X (1927), 267.

[3] Min., Jan. 31, Feb. 15, 1919.

[4] Circuits were the administrative unit between the district and congregation. They were presided over by a visitor, a pastor of one of the churches in the circuit.

Such determined efforts were necessary not only because of the large goal, but also because of opposition within the Synod. In addition to suspicion which the league met as a new organization of laymen, there was open opposition to this project from more conservative circles. The Missouri Synod had in the nineteenth century maintained that life insurance demonstrated a distrust of God's beneficence and was, moreover, a particularly insidious form of gambling.[2] Now this argument was turned against the endowment fund. The fund was viewed as "a gigantic insurance scheme hatched and bred out by the pastors." Of all people, ministers, it was said, should have no sinful worries about their future; the collection of such a fund was leading the Synod straight into the snares of the Devil.[3]

Opposition such as this, and a campaign that had too little preliminary fanfare and was perhaps too short for the magnitude of the goal, probably played the major roles in curtailing the results of the drive. Not until May was the LLL able to announce that the first million dollars was collected; the figure did not reach two million until April, 1920.[1] No one can say whether the LLL would finally have reached the three million mark had collections for a Synodical building fund and for a European relief fund not intervened. However, the failure of the league to reach its goal--as disappointing and unfortunate as it was at the time--did not directly jeopardize the expansion of any essential Synodical function.

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[1] Min., Mar. 1, 1919, p. 2. The influence of World War I on many different aspects of the LLL drive--though never explicitly admitted--is too striking to go without comment. Contributions to the fund were urged as a form of thank offering for the return of peace, and of the congregations' sons. (DL, LXXV [1919], 71.) The form of offering, war bonds, was, of course, a direct outgrowth of war financing. Equally direct were techniques of fund raising. During 1917 and 1918, Americans had become accustomed to multimillion dollar goals. And largely through the war, Americans had also become acquainted with high pressure, fast paced financial drives, with handbooks for volunteer speakers, and canned sermons for the clergy.

[2] See TQ, III (1899), 441.

[3] Trans., 1920, p. 78. See also Dorothea Stipp to Graebner, Oct. 14, 1919; Graebner to Lamprecht, Oct. 11, 1919, TG 78.

To dwell, therefore, on the league's failure would miss the true significance of the whole LLL drive. At this stage of acculturation in the Missouri Synod the most important benefit of the campaign was not the amount collected, but the experience of having for the first time conducted and participated in a multi-million dollar effort. As Henry Horst put it in May, 1919, the drive "has been worth while no matter what sum we get. That has been proved by letters from pastors which show the value of the drive cannot be measured by dollars and cents."[2]

"I have never written so many millions as in the past few days," observed Theodore Graebner to W. C. Kohn in

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[1] LW, XXXVIII (1919), 151; XXXIX (1920), 144.

[2] Min. (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 8.

January, 1919; "a dollar begins to look like three lead dimes."[1] The Witness editor was not alone in such sentiments. The drive was a powerful force in raising financial expectations within the whole Synod. A million dollars would no longer look quite so large, nor quite so impossible to attain. It was probably not all coincidence that the million dollar appropriation--the first such ever made--for a new seminary was passed at the 1920 Synodical convention the morning after the LLL had formally turned over its funds collected.[2]

The strenuous efforts, born of necessity in a campaign of this size, to secure contributions from as large a number of individuals as possible brought home to many as nothing had previously the needs of the Synod as a whole. Wrote Fuerbringer, "many of our Christians have learned from this drive to give a great amount for outside purposes."[3] Success bred success. One pastor reported, "At first my congregation thought the whole collection would come to nothing, that it was unheard of to think of raising even one million. But when they read the first report and saw that already $700,000 had been collected and then soon after that over one million dollars was on hand, they would not stand back.

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[1] Jan. 29, 1919, TG 78.

[2] LW, XXXIX (1920), 212.

[3] DL, LXXVI (1920), 97.

We are now at work."[1]

Finally, a campaign of this size was important for denominational self-consciousness and pride. Early in 1919 Ludwig Fuerbringer noted that various other denominations were beginning victory fund drives. He reported that people had written him asking, "what is our Lutheran Church doing?" and assured Lutheraner readers that the LLL had big plans afoot.[2] Assuredly, some of this was using denominational competitiveness to put Lutherans on their mettle. But for a group still unsure of its position socially among American denominations, raising comparable sums for church work was an important reassurance.[3]

The experience provided by the drive was equally important for those who conducted the effort. By their careful planning and step-by-step procedure, the campaign managers contributed to better communication between the various levels of the Synod. While W. C. Kohn exaggerated slightly, his point was still valid when he told LLL officers, "we have educated the ministers to such an extent that they now answer promptly when asked a question. This has been accomplished through the work of the Army and Navy Board and the LLL drive."[1] The league's campaign offered a serious test for procedures tried out on a small scale in the previous effort by the board. A number of new devices were also experimented with in the LLL drive. The extensive schedule for meetings on Synodical, district, circuit, and congregational levels was an innovation. So also was the use of a fund raising thermometer (in which the mercury rises according to contributions) in the Synod's periodicals.[2]

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[1] DL, LXXV (1919), 217.

[2] DL, LXXV (1919), 6.

[3] An unpublicized result of the LLL campaign was to boost the Lutheran Witness circulation. The league adopted the Witness as its periodical during the drive and gave a subscription to it for every donation over $6. Circulation climbed briefly from 19,000 to at least 75,000. After the drive it dropped precipitously, as would be expected, but not lower than 29,000. This last figure represented nearly a 50% rise in less than three years. LW, XXXVII (1918), 111; XXXIX (1920), 41; DL, LXXVII (1921), 168.

Finally, not only procedures were tested in this campaign, but also men. J. M. Bailey later accepted a post at the Walther League headquarters and also served on the publicity and lectures committee of the synodical mission boards' conference.[3] F. C. Streufert was later elected to the Synodical Board of Directors, and in 1932 became the first secretary of missions. Most important for future Synodical fund raising was Theodore Eckhart. Eckhart left a plumbing salesman's job in 1918 to act as office manager for the Board for Army and Navy. He worked in the same capacity for the LLL campaign committee. On the basis of the experience of these two drives and the aptitude he demonstrated, he moved on in 1920 to become the Synod's first financial secretary.

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[1] Min. (first draft), May 23, 1919, p. 9. See also F. C. Streufert to Graebner, Mar. 5, 1919, TG 78.

[2] First used in DL, LXXV (1919), 265.

[3] DL, LXXXI (1925), 253.

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"There was a time," Mark May observed of the American clergy, "when the pastor was a priest, a bishop, a social worker, an educator, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a lawyer, a judge--these and more--all in one." This is no longer true, he said in 1934; "one by one, the functions which the pastor once performed are being performed by special agencies."[1] The Missouri Synod pastor shared much of this loss of function and prestige. In fact, the German Lutheran pastor probably lost more functions in a shorter period of time than his American counterpart.[2] As ethnic society yielded to centrifugal forces, the laity had less need, and less desire, for the comprehensive clerical leadership typical in the immigrant community.

For the Missouri Synod the change in relationships between clergy and laity was inaugurated not by an open rebellion against the clergy, but rather in professed attempts to help them in financial affairs. Involved, though, was at least implicit criticism of clerical leadership. By their efforts the laymen demonstrated their acceptance of American attitudes. They had acquired an intimate knowledge of large scale finance and had also gained self-confidence and self-reliance outside of the German Lutheran community. The laity was ready for a more active role in the church.

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[1] The Profession of the Ministry, p. 387.

[2] Nevertheless, judging from Paul Carter's description of the American ministry of the Twenties, the Missouri Synod pastor was still in a better position than his colleague in some other Protestant denominations. By staying out of the Prohibition battle, for instance, the Missourian clergy did not suffer the loss of prestige experienced by some of the more unscrupulous temperance advocates. The Synod's pastors were relatively well educated--even if their exposure to non-Lutheran theology was severely limited. The status of the Synodical clergy was partially reflected in the absence of a recruitment problem. It is true that the Missouri Synod clergy shared a low pay scale, but this does not seem to have had quite the same effect as is described by Carter for some other churches. See The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel (Ithaca, 1954), pp. 70-84.

What the clergy regarded as the legitimate theological perogatives of the ministry remained unquestioned. But once the laity viewed the clergy's financial competence from American standards, it was easier to challenge pastoral leadership in other aspects of life as well. The leadership of wealthy businessmen in the Synod, the exodus from the shadow of the urban parsonage to the suburbs, greater use of English, and the rise of another generation still further removed from the immigrant past: all meant increasing lay dissatisfaction with the pastor's traditional, immigrant role.

In their search for legitimate expressions of independence, the laity both took over duties previously administered by the clergy and inaugurated activities previously unknown in the Synod. The laymen struck first on a financial drive which was in many ways the starting point for Synodical finance in the twentieth century. In this campaign the laymen proved their capacity and their opinions to the Synod, and equally important, to themselves. By their ability to keep a lay organization alive through the Twenties and to successfully adapt it to new circumstances and a new goal at the end of the decade, the laymen illustrated how far they had come from the attitudes and needs of the German Lutheran immigrant. They also gave promise for future contributions to the strength of the Missouri Synod.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FATHER'S BUSINESS

In 1917 the Missouri Synod still reflected its immigrant past in its regular collection of operating funds. Missouri Lutherans continued to contribute as they had when they were newly arrived immigrants struggling for an existence, even though in the meantime they had moved far financially from the day when they, or their parents, or their grandparents, had gotten off the boat from Germany. In 1917 the Synodical budget for a denomination of more than 600,000 communicant members was only $430,000.[1] Even this goal was not reached. Chronically frustrated Synodical officials were resigned to large deficits in small budgets. From the totals contributed, Graebner complained, "you would think that the Missouri Synod was made up of poor widows whose only sons are employed as freight handlers and drain diggers."[2] To take its place among American denominations, to conduct programs commensurate with its size, the Synod had to correct an abysmal financial situation.

The American denominations were well ahead of the

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[1] LW, XXXVI (1917), 27.

[2] AL, VI (1923), 66.

Missouri Synod in developing efficient methods of support. Shortly after the turn of the century, the "every member canvass" and the envelope system for communicant members had been introduced by other denominations.[1] Missouri Synod congregations, however, were exceedingly slow to make such improvements. The rural churches, especially, were not many years away from the method described by Theodore Graebner.

> Once a year the pastor would hitch his faithful nag to the buggy and in easy stages would make the rounds of his congregation. He would call at his farmers, and, as a rule, would commence the proceedings--this was expected--with a general pastoral conversation, conducted in the farmyard with the head of the household. Pretty soon the parishioner would say, 'Nun, kommen Sie mal,' and would retire with the pastor into the shadow of a barn. The transactions were always in cash, and the amounts were never published.[2]

Most congregations were yet struggling up the evolution outlined in the Witness: "the cigar-box system, the Klingelbeutel, the quarterly collection, the monthly contribution at the business meeting, the envelope."[3]

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[1] See William H. Leach, "Financing the Local Church," Religion in American Society, vol 332 (Nov. 1960), The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 76.

[2] LW, XXXIX (1920), 311.

[3] Ibid. The Klingelbeutel was a cloth bag with bell attached, often fastened at the end of a pole, and passed down the pews.

The paper cover of Samuel A. Stein's A Guide to Church Finance, published by the more Americanized Ohio Synod in 1920 (Columbus, Ohio), pictured the progression of fund raising. Beside the date 1850 is a hand passing a broad-brimmed hat; beside 1875 is the Klingelbeutel; 1900, a plate with coins; and 1920 is a plate with envelopes. While the dates were much too optimistic for the Missouri Synod, the general progression corroborated the Witness.

As late as World War I, the concept of regular weekly contributions was foreign to many congregations. "Four or six collections, later perhaps eight or twelve, were given during the course of the year for synodical and benevolent purposes."[1] Pew renting as a revenue measure was still known.[2] In 1913 Concordia Publishing House supplied only enough envelopes for the weekly contributions of about forty thousand members out of a total of more than six hundred thousand communicants in the Synod.[3] In spite of the extreme disparity between receipts before and after the introduction of envelopes--a doubling or tripling of contributions was not unusual--Synodical periodicals had to urge the use of envelopes repeatedly even during the early Twenties.[4] So elementary a technique as the thorough canvassing of all communicant members to collect donations was first introduced to the Synod by a few congregations only in 1916.[5]

Given such a perilous state of fund raising within the congregations, neither the districts, which were dependent upon the congregations, nor the Synod, which was dependent upon the districts, had a very sound financial base.[1] Attempts were made to improve matters on the Synodical level in 1905 and again in 1911. In 1905, the so-called "Detroit Resolutions" were passed by the triennial convention, requiring circuit visitors to encourage contributions to the Synodical treasuries and to pay special attention to congregations which did little for the Synod. The visitor was also to make a financial report to the district president. At the 1911 convention, congregations were requested to pledge some amount to Synodical treasuries. Also, the president and treasurer of the Synod were authorized to prepare and publish an annual budget.[2]

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[1] J. H. C. Fritz, Church Finances (CPH, 1922), p. 7.

[2] AL, II (1919), 54.

[3] DL, LXX (1914), 7.

[4] For case histories, see DL, LXX (1914), 302-303; LXXIV (1918), 421; LXXVI (1920), 277, 343; Fritz, Finances, pp. 45, 62.

[5] The first report in the Synodical press occurred in 1916 and concerned Calvary Church, Buffalo. LW, XXXV (1916), 194. The same method was soon thereafter used by congregations in New Jersey, Indiana, and Ohio. LW, XXXVI (1917), 53, 87, 51; see also XXXVII (1918), 265. The Witness gave extended and detailed accounts of the procedures employed in each case.

Save for the budget, these resolutions were dead letters. Financial procedures remained a tragedy of errors. Some pastors kept no financial records to report to the Synod; others diverted the receipts of the congregation into a favorite project in the Synod instead of toward the operating budget.[3] District treasurers were known to cover district deficits with funds donated for the Synodical treasuries.[1] The Synodical budget was published only after the first of the year it covered; congregations made up their budgets (supposedly to include an allocation for the Synod) before the first of the year.[2] Some districts did not even have a budget, or at least did not distribute it to circuits or congregations.[3]

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[1] The Synod received funds mainly through the district treasurer. However, individuals or congregations could send contributions directly to the Synodical treasurer.

[2] Ver., 1905, 138-139; 1911, 172.

[3] LLL Trans., Nov. 7, 1919, pp. 59-60.

Each project of the Synod (home missions, educational institutions, immigrant chaplain, etc.) had its own "treasury" to which individuals or congregations specifically donated. Each contributor had to divide his gifts as he thought best. Thus, in the same year, one treasury would hold a surplus while another might show a deficit.[4] Often the collection on a given Sunday would be turned over by a congregation to a certain treasury. Without an envelope system, collections were dependent upon attendance. If a special collection Sunday enjoyed fair weather, the Negro missions might get a surplus, while on a rainy special collection Sunday, district missions might suffer.[5] Finally, in all of the Synod there was not a single full time official concerned with financial affairs. As well informed a group as the LLL was even uncertain in 1919 who made up the Synodical budget.[1]

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[1] DL, LXXVI (1920), 134; E. Seuel to Bd. of Directors, Sept. 26, 1922, bound with BdD Min.

[2] Ver., 1920, 207.

[3] Theo. Eckhart to District Presidents, May 24, 1921, TG 65.

[4] This happened as late as 1923. DL, LXXIX, 76.

[5] Pointed out by Fritz in DL, LXXVII (1921), 420.

In spite of the improvements the American denominations made in congregational fund raising, they still shared at least the Missouri Synod's need for greater amounts of capital. Increasingly in the twentieth century, the example of business and business efficiency was held up as the answer to these needs. By the 1920's the apotheosis of the businessman in American society was at the peak of a rise that had begun about the Civil War. America was the most powerful country in the world and American society the wealthiest and most comfortable. Business had accomplished this. The almost inevitable result of such idealization was overwhelming pressure to make business a religion, and religion a business.[2]

Religion was interpreted in business language and concepts. The Gospel became the Golden Rule, and the Bible a business handbook. Exodus in the Old Testament was used to illustrate the fundamental points of risk and liability in insurance coverage. A successful bond salesman told how he drew his most persuasive arguments from Ezekiel.[3] Bruce Barton complimented Christ as a superlative executive who picked up twelve men from the bottom of the ranks and welded them into an organization that conquered the world.[1]

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[1] LLL Trans., 1919, p. 80. Synodical treasurer Seuel, among other duties, also managed CPH, one of the largest denominational publishing firms in the country.

[2] See Allen, pp. 125-128; Olmstead, pp. 478-480; Sweet, pp. 348-352; and especially Doherty.

[3] Doherty, p. 150.

Ideals of business were also pressed on the churches. The divisions between denominations were challenged, not as divisive of the Body of Christ, but as inefficient overlapping. Ecclesiastical structure was criticized, not on the basis of the New Testament church, but of corporation administration charts. Christian giving was reappraised, not as an expression of love, but as an investment which had to be sold to people as one sold stocks and bonds. The most extreme expression of the demand for church efficiency was the Interchurch World Movement of 1919-1920. An inter-denominational effort to raise vast amounts of money was planned and an extensive bureaucracy established to reach this goal. The structure, however, was top-heavy and the goal visionary; the American economy, moreover, went into a recession in the year immediately after the war. In the end, the participating denominations were left with debts.[2] Yet, pressure for efficiency continued through the Twenties.

Although never so crass in the Missouri Synod, the same calls for business efficiency were also voiced within Synodical circles about the time of the war. They came especially from the prosperous businessmen who helped organize and boost the Lutheran Laymen's League. Similar statements came also from the reform wing of the clergy. The financial status of the Synod did leave no doubt that improvements were imperative. In addition, the Synod was still working under an administrative system established to meet the needs of a small, scattered body of immigrants; few concessions to the Synod's growth had been made.[1] Yet, as justified as the recommendations for improvements in efficiency were, the rhetoric and models were borrowed almost exclusively from business circles. Business ideals were especially apparent in the two changes urged by Missouri Synod laymen: a better fund raising plan, and full time officials to administer it.

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[1] Pp. 1-31.

[2] Olmstead, p. 514; Sweet, p. 404.

The most important spokesman for business-like efficiency in collection techniques was A. H. Ahlbrand of Seymour, Indiana. Ahlbrand was second generation American. His formal education was limited to eight grades of parochial school; after a few months at the Fort Wayne preparatory school, he decided against the ministry and returned to Seymour where he spent the rest of his life. Among his business enterprises were large scale farming, blacksmithing, carriage building, and auto sales.[2]

Apparently the catalyst for Ahlbrand's interest in Synodical finance was A. G. Brauer's private appeal in 1915 to eliminate the Synod's debt. In his reply to Brauer,

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[1] The Synodical presidency was the first to become a full time office, and that not until 1911.

[2] See autobiographical letter to Lawrence Meyer, June 13, 1929, TG 80.

Ahlbrand sketched a perceptive analysis of the situation.

> When our forefathers founded the Synod it was a small body and the members were closely in touch with the situation and responded liberally. . . . However, conditions are entirely different today. The Synod is a large body consisting of a number of congregations spread over the whole United States. . . . For this reason, the former methods that brought results do not bring results today, not because the people have not the money, neither because they are not willing to give--it is simply because they are not in touch with the situation.

To remedy the problem, Ahlbrand proposed a finance board, with a full time manager. "We realize of course, the first thing we are told when we talk of comprehensive system, that the cost of handling this would represent too much loss to the Synodical Treasury, but I argue that these men will double and triple their expense and salary by the additional money derived for Synodical purposes."[1]

Ahlbrand had a receptive audience; at the laymen's meeting during the 1917 triennial convention in Milwaukee (the first he attended),[2] he was invited to give "a treatise on Synodical finances." As he later recalled, "I likened the Synod to a large business corporation with agencies all over the country--a sales-manager and salesmen for each large Dist. and one to cover several small Dist's. These men were to sell the Synod to each congregation in Synod. They had to make daily reports to the sales manager."[3]

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[1] Feb. 18, 1915, TG 78.

[2] LLL Trans., 1919, p. 82.

[3] Ahlbrand to L. Meyer, June 13, 1929, TG 80.

The laymen's meeting subsequently adopted resolutions which became known as the Ahlbrand plan. The resolutions recommended that representative laymen from each congregation in a circuit meet to discuss Synodical finances. After apportioning the financial share of each congregation, they were to whip up enthusiasm at home.[1] These resolutions, however, like those of 1905 and 1911, remained a dead letter in most parts of the Synod.[2] Admitted Ahlbrand ruefully in 1919, "it seemed as if we have been in the habit, when we go to Synod meetings, that somebody would present a proposition . . . and after we adopt it we all go home and forget about it."[3]

The LLL, however, offered Ahlbrand both support and a rostrum. Even before the endowment fund drive was begun by the league, it was noted that, "contact of the L.L.L. with each congregation through a committee of laymen should also, after this campaign is over, prove valuable then to push the so-called 'Milwaukee Laymen's Resolutions' to more general adoption."[4] When the LLL called together the district presidents in January, 1919 to hear about the endowment fund campaign, Ahlbrand also addressed them on general fund raising.[1]

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[1] Pro., 1917, 55-56.

[2] They were extensively tested only in the Central and Western districts. Ahlbrand lived in the Central District. President of the Western was John H. C. Fritz. See LW, XLI (1922), 11. For information on the use of the Ahlbrand plan prior to 1920, see LLL Trans., 1919, p. 49; Ver., 1920, 203-204; DL, LXXV (1919), 314-316; Meeting of Lutheran Lay Delegates of Peoria-Rock Island [Ill.] Circuit, June 17, 1918 (printed sheet filed at CHI under LLL).

[3] LLL Trans., 1919, p. 48. See also Trans., 1920, p. 36.

[4] Min., Jan. 20-21, 1919, p. 4. In line with this, late in 1918 the league sent out reminders of the resolutions

At a November, 1919 LLL meeting Ahlbrand was again on hand and reported that in his district, the laymen, in face of clerical opposition, had insisted upon the introduction of more business-like methods. Finding that the "ordinary pastor is a very poor bookkeeper,"[2] the laymen in the Central District began by developing a standardized form for congregational account keeping. On the form was inserted one communicant member's share of the total Synodical budget. The local pastor was to multiply this by his membership to get the congregational total.[3] The same was done for individual items of the Synodical budget (such as home missions, for instance) so that the pastor could tell immediately how much to send to each "treasury" of the Synod. Such a system, reported Ahlbrand, put real pressure on lagging congregations

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to all 851 of the lay delegates who had attended the Milwaukee convention. Min., Oct. 8, 1918; DL, LXXIV (1918), 375.

[1] Min., Jan. 22, 1919, p. 9.

[2] LLL Trans., Nov. 7, 1919, p. 62.

[3] One result of this reliance on the congregation's communicant membership was that pastors were more careful to take inactive members off their rolls lest their quotas be higher than necessary. Some observers maintained that this helped account for the low growth rate of the Synod in the early Twenties. (Statistician Ernst Eckhardt in LW, XLVIII [1929], 80.) However, the high growth rate of the English District, presumably not much less affected by the cutting out of dead wood, contradicts this assertion.

to produce. "The minute you get a man on record he is going to get busy. Nobody likes to fall down on the job, whether it is a pastor or a layman."[1] Laymen embarrassed at the circuit meeting by their congregation's poor showing, Ahlbrand said, vowed such would never happen again.

The discussion following Ahlbrand's presentation at this 1919 LLL meeting illustrated what might happen when laymen gathered to discuss church finances seriously. The scope gradually broadened from the local parish to Synodical budget making. It moved on to budget enforcement, then to the lack of personnel handling financial affairs, and to the need for more attention at conventions to such important matters. The meeting concluded with a discussion of lay representation[2] and with a motion to appoint a committee to draw up further resolutions for the 1920 triennial convention.

Chiefly under the influence and leadership of Ahlbrand,[3] this committee presented to the 1920 convention a memorial calling for the extension of the circuit lay delegate meetings to district and Synodical levels, and also recommending the adoption of standardized reporting forms for each level of the Synod.[1] By 1920 much support had been mobilized.[2] The resolutions were carried by a large majority.[3]

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[1] Trans., Nov. 7, 1919, p. 56.

[2] "Let's send men that are able, that know something. . . . At least if we cannot send men who can talk, we can send men who can vote right. So many of our delegates can't even vote right." Trans., 1919, p. 90.

[3] LLL Trans., 1920, p. 67. Ahlbrand was called upon to explain his plan before the Synodical convention as a whole.

Use of the Ahlbrand plan spread rather slowly, however. Opposition to the plan continued in many quarters. Moreover, even though he had approved the plan prior to its presentation to the 1920 convention,[4] President Pfotenhauer was unwilling to apply much pressure for general adoption lest he violate congregational autonomy. In 1921 he opposed efforts by the LLL to have printed and distributed a booklet explaining the idea. Only under continued pressure from the LLL, Financial Secretary Theodore Eckhart, and the St. Louis pastoral conference, did the Synodical Board of Directors authorize the publication and distribution of materials on the plan. The board, however, modified the exclusively lay orientation of the plan by insisting that pastors as well as laymen should attend the meetings proposed.[5]

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[1] A sample form is given in Ver., 1920, 208-209.

[2] The league's suggestion was backed, significantly, by memorials from both the Central and Western districts. Ver., 1920, 202-205. Noted Ahlbrand in 1919, "The Milwaukee proposition was the first Synod meeting I ever attended and I learned something. If a fellow gets hooked up with Mr. Bosse [LLL founder and Evansville, Ind., mayor], and some of these fellows, he gets to be kind of a politician. . . . You know how to pull the ropes, you know." LLL Trans., 1919, p. 82.

[3] LW, XXXIX (1920), 217.

[4] H. H. Zimmerman to Graebner, Jan. 3, 1920, TG 69.

[5] BdD Min., 210525H; Synodical Handbook (CPH, 1924), p. 141. For pressure put on the board, see LLL Min., Feb. 11, 1921, pp. 3-5; Mar. 11-12, 1921, p. 6; BdD Min., 210331R; H. Hohenstein to Bd. of Directors, BdD, filed under "Financial Secretary."

Resistance to the plan came into the open at the 1923 triennial convention when a group of pastors from Iowa presented a long memorial complaining especially about the "legalism" of the quotas established in the plan. The convention rejected the memorial with the explanation that the Iowa pastors had misinterpreted the quota system.[1] By 1923, though, even those advocating more efficient fund raising were ready to admit privately that the plan was both cumbersome and susceptible to misinterpretation.[2] The Ahlbrand plan had served its usefulness in arousing laymen to action and in giving some blueprint where previously there had been none. After the convention it was referred to less and less frequently.

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The second recommendation of those who desired more fiscal efficiency supported full time officials to administer Synodical fund raising. The laymen were outspoken against part time offices. This recommendation, too, was often phrased in the prevailing business terminology. Wrote Ahlbrand, "under the present system we select a Pastor for the office of [district] President who is already burdened with all the work that he can do by looking after the welfare of the congregation he is serving. . . . To overcome this shortage on his part we have a number of official [circuit] visitors who are also loaded down with work in looking after their own local congregations.[1] Such overloading "is against all business ethics," Ahlbrand told the LLL. "No man would ever try to do anything of that kind in business."[2]

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[1] Ein., 1923, 180-182; Ver., 1923, 217.

[2] Eckhart to Graebner, June 5, 1923, TG 65; Graebner to Theodore Lamprecht, Jan. 8, 1923, TG 69.

What was needed, wrote another layman, was "proper centralization of all administrative functions of the Synod in a centrally located office, for instance in Chicago. In my opinion such central office [sic] should house various Under-secretaries. For instance, there should be a financial secretary." His work "should be similar to that of a credit and advertising manager of a large business establishment." The experience of the drives for the chaplaincy work and for the LLL endowment fund demonstrated that such an office would be a good investment.[3]

By 1920 the appointment of a financial secretary had fairly widespread backing.[4] Six different memorials favoring a financial secretary were presented to the convention from all parts of the Synod.[5] Aided by such support, the office was approved without undue hesitation.[1]

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[1] Ahlbrand to R. Jesse, Dec. 8, 1918, TG 65.

[2] Trans., 1919, p. 42.

[3] Eugene Wengert to Graebner, Jan. 2, 1920, TG 69.

[4] Theodore Graebner, who was not normally very sanguine about triennial conventions, predicted before the 1920 meeting that a financial secretary would be appointed, "because that is in the air (Interchurch [World Movement] etc.); we must become 'financially efficient.'" Graebner to O. L. Hohenstein, April 27, 1920, TG 69.

[5] The office had also been written into the revised Synodical constitution approved by the 1917 convention for

The Synodical Board of Directors subsequently appointed Theodore Eckhart, veteran of the drive by the Board for Army and Navy, as well as the LLL endowment fund effort.[2] Eckhart brought with him extensive files on individual congregations compiled by both the LLL headquarters and by the campaign committee,[3] the experience of two large-scale campaigns and few preconceptions of what a financial secretary of the Synod ought to do.[4]

Eckhart's appointment was a timely one, for the 1920 appropriations were the highest in Synodical history. The convention voted a million dollars for a new St. Louis seminary alone. Yet, as large as this sum was, Synodical officials hesitated to adopt new methods. It was almost as if the two previous campaigns had never been conducted. The Board of Directors decided to collect the amount in a two year drive beginning in 1920. Although Pfotenhauer did call

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ratification by the congregations. Significantly, the constitutional committee was composed of J. H. C. Fritz, LLL founder John W. Boehne, and chairman Ludwig Fuerbringer. LW, XXXVI (1917), 154.

[1] Ein., 1920, 137-146; Pro., 1920, 75.

[2] He was appointed upon the recommendation of at least laymen A. H. Ahlbrand and H. H. Zimmerman. Ahlbrand to M. F. Kretzmann, July 26, 1920, BdD, filed under "Ahlbrand"; Zimmerman to Graebner, Jan. 3, 1920, TG 69.

Ahlbrand's chief criteria for the job were that the incumbent have initiative and be a layman so he could be fired easily if that became necessary.

[3] LLL Min., Mar. 11-12, 1921, p. 7.

[4] Interview, July 16, 1963.

for an every-member canvass on Thanksgiving Day,[1] he ignored Eckhart's recommendations of more literature and additional help to produce it. He agreed to call shortages to the attention of the Synod, but as Eckhart observed, "it is not so much necessary that we draw our good people's attention to the state of this treasury as that we tell them in detail what it serves."[2]

The atmosphere of infectious enthusiasm and activity, so typical of the two preceding campaigns, was utterly missing from this one. The result was predictable. In the fall of 1920, instead of collecting $750,000, the Synod took in only about $75,000.[3] Less than half the goal was collected a year after it should have been reached.[4]

Understandably concerned that the lack of funds would undercut their efforts, the seminary building committee appointed Fritz, Graebner, and Fuerbringer to confer with Eckhart. A program based on LLL experience was finally put into action.[5] The effort was not sufficient, however; by the end of 1922 the building fund had reached only two-thirds of the amount granted by the Synod.

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[1] DL, LXXVI (1920), 337.

[2] Eckhart to M. F. Kretzmann, April 11, 1921, BdD, filed under "Financial Secretary." See also Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, n.d. [late Mar., 1919]; Pfotenhauer to Eckhart, April 8, 1921.

[3] According to Graebner in AL, VI (1923), 66.

[4] LW, XLI (1922), 415.

[5] WLM, XXXI (1922), 128; LW, XLI (1922), 325; "Program of Building Fund Campaign" (mimeographed), n.d., TG 2; DL, LXXVIII (1922), 377, 373, 396-97.

When it became clear early in 1923 that the proposed plans would necessitate funds even above the original appropriation (itself not yet collected), the building committee again turned to the LLL. The committee proposed a private, personal solicitation to collect the extra funds before the convention.[1] Before the plan could be extensively tested, though, bids for the seminary indicated an excess of a million and a half dollars above the original appropriation. This was clearly beyond the private capabilities of the LLL, and the league relaxed, waiting for the outcome of the 1923 Synodical sessions.[2]

The laymen by this time were outspokenly unhappy with the way Synodical finances, and particularly the building fund drive, had been handled. At a May, 1922 meeting, the LLL directors adopted resolutions declaring unanimously that "the fault lay not so much with the unwillingness or inability of our people, but rather in the fact that they lacked the necessary information to an astonishing degree. This in turn was laid at the door of Synod's officials, the District Presidents, and chiefly the great majority of our pastors."[3]

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[1] Min., Jan. 12-13, 1923, pp. 3-6; Min., Jan. 20, 1923. Brauer, L. Volkman, O. Harms, Ahlbrand, Pieper, Brand, Fritz, and Graebner were to canvass the Synod, with the major load falling on Graebner.

[2] Min., Feb. 27, Feb. 28-Mar. 1, 1923.

[3] Min., May 24, 1922, p. 5. On the same date, the LLL met with the district presidents to deliberate on a renewed effort (after the failure of the first in 1920 and 1921)

This direct assault was not published, but in 1923 Lamprecht declared openly before the LLL convention that "too trustful drivers" had allowed the Synodical cart to run into a rut.[1]

The LLL directors decided that still more man-power was needed; a vice-president of the Synod should be given "the sole duty of impressing upon pastors and congregations their obligation to promptly raise any monies appropriated by the Synod."[2] A memorial to that effect was accordingly introduced for Synodical consideration.[3] To support its case, the LLL sent to every Missouri Synod pastor a copy of Graebner's American Lutheran article, "Wanted--More Overhead," a blast against attempting to administer the Synod with only four full time officials.[4] During the 1923 convention the league distributed copies of Synodical resolutions on fund raising from the 1860's. Ahlbrand shrewdly cited these to prove that the founding fathers had established congregational

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to raise a building fund. At this joint session, the clergy made speeches blaming hard times in rural areas for shortages, and appealing to wealthy members for contributions. The LLL responded with statements that times were no harder than in the cities. By prior agreement, the laymen deliberately held back from offering any recommendations regarding the building fund, apparently in passive protest against the lack of initiative among Synodical officialdom. Min. (first draft, and official), May 23, May 24, 1922; LW, XLI (1922), 189-190.

[1] LLL Pro., 1923, 4.

[2] Min., Mar. 1, 1923.

[3] Ein., 1923, 183.

[4] President, financial secretary, secretary of schools, director of foreign missions. See AL, VI (1923), 65 and 72.

quotas and used a rudimentary every-member canvass.[1]

The 1923 convention was an eventful one in financial matters. The delegates rejected the Iowa attack on the Ahlbrand plan. Then, disregarding the opposition of especially the district presidents,[2] the delegates agreed to the revised figure for the new St. Louis seminary. The convention went on to grant significant construction funds to almost all the junior colleges and prep schools. The building appropriations alone totaled an unprecedented $3,850,000. Finally, the convention fight over the appointment of another man, perhaps a vice-president, to the financial office was a spirited one. Although the floor committee on financial matters reported the memorial favorably, the delegates voted down the office by an extremely close decision.[3] The convention did, however, approve the LLL recommendation to appoint a special committee for the building fund drive.[4] Thus, by 1923 the advocates of efficient financial administration had a mixed record. Though the Synod had approved one financial manager, it balked at reinforcing this office.

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[1] LLL Min., June 17, 1923; Trans., 1919, pp. 43-44; Ahlbrand to R. Jesse, Dec. 8, 1919, TG 65.

[2] LW, XLII (1923), 238.

[3] DL, LXXIX (1923), 230. The vote was 195-181. This was one of the few times during the Twenties that the convention ballot on any issue was reported. The official proceedings rarely gave voting tallies.

[4] Ein., 1923, 183.

4

The campaign to raise the nearly four million dollars appropriated by the 1923 triennial convention for the Synod's educational system was the most important, and most successful, financial effort during the Twenties. The drive was conducted by Pastors John H. C. Fritz, John C. Baur, and Financial Secretary Theodore Eckhart, appointed to a Ways and Means Committee by the Board of Directors in July, 1923.[1]

Baur was the dynamic secretary of the American Luther League, and had been active since 1917 in local fund raising. In financial matters, Fritz was an advocate of the Ahlbrand plan, but was best known for his authorship in 1922 of Church Finances, the first manual on the subject published in the Synod. In it Fritz outlined fund raising theory and practice in a coherent form and with sorely needed emphasis on proper Christian motivation. His approach was three-fold, summed up in "Gospel, Information, System." The Gospel "furnishes the motive power, the information arouses the interest, the system supplies the opportunity."[2]

The experience and ideas of these three men were added to the precedents set by the earlier drives of the Army and

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[1] The Ways and Means Committee in turn appointed a lay advisory committee, "to do away with the feeling that may exist that the clergy is too strongly represented." W&M Min., Aug. 14, 1923. See also BdD Min., 230822D; DL, LXXX (1924), 168-69.

[2] P. 6.

Navy Board and the LLL.[1] Precedents conflicted, however, regarding audience. The early LLL drives had drawn largely from the wealthy. And Theodore Graebner, from his canvassing for large contributions in 1922-23, insisted that the committee must continue this emphasis.[2] J. C. Baur, from the popularly-based American Luther League, was equally insistent that the committee could not reach its goal if it ignored the Synod's rank and file.[3] Ultimately, the committee combined the two approaches; the great bulk of contributions, though, came in relatively small amounts.[4]

Though the mechanics of previous drives were generally followed, the sequence of material was better thought out. The first major tract was on stewardship; the first sermon on the work of the church. Then came the principal piece of literature, demonstrating the necessity for more buildings. Finally came the every-member canvass.[5]

The committee also made important improvements first in the thoroughness of the news coverage and the quality of the literature disseminated and, second, in the use of pledges to be paid in monthly installments over two years.

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[1] At the August first meeting of the committee, Baur reported that he had spoken at length with W. C. Kohn, head of the two previous drives. "A number of valuable suggestions were received . . . and will be followed conscientiously." W&M Min.

[2] Graebner to Fritz, Sept. 13, 1923, TG 2.

[3] Interview with Baur.

[4] A special Centurion booklet was published in an appeal for large gifts. Fritz to Graebner, Aug. 2, 1923, TG 2. Graebner to P. P. Ansprach, Oct. 27, 1924, TG 2.

[5] See Ways and Means Committee to District Presidents, n.d. [Aug., 1923], filed at CHI under W&M.

The committee distributed in all just over two million pieces of literature, divided among fifteen titles.[1] More important than the volume was the style of the literature. No previous drive had achieved such eye-appeal in its publications. The man chiefly responsible was John C. Baur. Fine paper, many photographs well reproduced, and good, varied typography in a pleasing arrangement characterized the committee's literature.[2] Few pieces were "throwaway fliers"; some, in fact, were more like souvenir booklets. Material of this sort was costly, but the hallmark of the Ways and Means Committee drive was an anxiety to avoid false economy.[3]

The committee also instituted a news service to supply appropriate articles for parish, district, and other papers.[4]

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[1] Seven of these titles were the German translation or companion to an English title. Except for pieces aimed at the young people, almost as many German copies as English were printed. For list of titles issued and totals printed, see Ways and Means Committee to Bd. of Directors, Jan. 8, 1924, filed at CHI under W&M. Copies of most of the literature is also filed there, and under TG 2.

[2] Some of the credit for this doubtless also belonged to L. W. Bendix Taenzer, an artist retained by the committee to do art work and help plan the lay-outs. W&M Min., Aug. 2, 1923.

[3] Prior to the Ways and Means Committee, $8,000 was spent on the building fund campaign. DL, LXXIX (1923), 220. From 1923 to 1926, about $60,000 was spent. "Plan for Collection," n.d., bound with BdD Min., 1926. As 1.3% of the receipts, this compared favorably with the LLL percentage (calculated without Witness subscriptions) of 1.04. LLL Min., May 24, 1922, p. 4.

[4] Min., Aug. 24, Sept. 20, 1923.

The Witness and Lutheraner, of course, carried large amounts of lively copy. With their arresting format, Fritz's columns, particularly, stood out in the rather sedate Lutheraner.[1]

Missouri Synod spokesmen had noted the successful use of pledges in the government and Red Cross drives during the war. The marked increase during the Twenties of consumer installment buying made the pledge increasingly attractive.[2] The committee's drive in 1923 was the first Synodical trial of the technique on a large scale.[3]

The results of the campaign justified fully the work and money expended upon it. The goal was over-pledged by nearly a million dollars. Largely because of careful follow-up work by the committee,[4] $4,539,817 of the $4,824,368 originally subscribed was actually paid by 1927 when the drive was considered over.[5]

Without the experience of World War I, of the Board for Army and Navy, of the LLL, and of several unsuccessful drives as well, the 1923 campaign would have been inconceivable.[1] Officials would not have known how to conduct such a drive; the laity would not have been educated to respond to it. Yet, the campaign by the Ways and Means Committee stands out in Synodical finances between 1917 and 1929. The drive provided badly needed funds for expansion of the Synod's educational institutions. Its success vindicated the opinions of those who urged a reform of Synodical finances. And it demonstrated that the Missouri Synod laity, if given the proper opportunity, was willing and able voluntarily to support its church on a level approaching that of American denominations.

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[1] LXXIX (1923), 289, 316, 332, 348, 365, 378.

[2] LW, XXXVI (1917), 363; DL, LXXIX (1923), 348. Significantly, both Baur and Fritz had early advocated pledges, especially on major collections. DL, LXXIII (1917), 35; Fritz, Finances, pp. 40-52.

[3] The LLL had a pledge campaign scheduled for the endowment fund drive's 1920 follow-up, but the effort was cancelled in favor of the building fund. LLL Trans., 1920, p. 99.

[4] DL, LXXX (1924), 444, 461; BdD Min., 250519F.

[5] LW, XLVI (1927), 94. This was above the $1,320,000 collected in the building fund up to June 30, 1923. LW, XLIII (1924), 195.

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While the Ways and Means Committee was enjoying such phenomenal success, Synodical officials were again faced with an alarming increase in the deficit from the regular budget. Beginning in 1923, regular receipts lagged further behind steadily rising expenditures of the Synod. The deficit jumped from $150,000 in 1923 to more than half a million in 1926.[2] In addition, the 1926 triennial convention again made substantial special appropriations; allocations for the Church Extension Fund and various building funds came to about four million dollars over the next three years. Total triennial commitments were approximately nine million dollars, not including the deficit. This totaled more than two million dollars higher than the 1923-1926 figure.[1]

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[1] Both Graebner and Lindemann testified to this quite explicitly. LW, XLIII (1924), 49; AL, VIII (1925), 2.

[2] SYB, 1937, 235.

To meet these financial demands, the advocates of efficiency renewed pressure for their program of better planning and adequate administration. They viewed the success of the Ways and Means Committee as evidence for their case. Even as the committee's campaign drew to a close in 1924, the critics suggested employing the same men and methods to attack regular Synodical finances. Attention centered particularly on employing John C. Baur. President Pfotenhauer, however, was unwilling to take the initiative in face of the 1923 convention's refusal to add another man to the fiscal office. Although at least some directors favored hiring Baur, the Synodical president carried his position through the Board of Directors and no such action was taken.[2] The matter was then brought before the 1926 triennial convention, and enough support marshalled finally to secure the second full time position in the financial office.[3] Ultimately the Board of Directors settled on Pastor Lawrence

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[1] "Plan for Collections, 1927-29," n.d. [summer, 1926], bound with BdD Min., 1926.

[2] Graebner to Henry Horst, May 10, 1924, TG 86; Graebner to F. F. Selle, Mar. 21, 1924, TG 2; Graebner to M. F. Kretzmann, May 14, 1924, TG 86; Ahlbrand to Pfotenhauer, June 12, 1924; Kretzmann to Ahlbrand, June 16, 1924, BdD, filed under "Ahlbrand."

[3] The move was officially supported by resolutions from the Fort Wayne pastoral conference and the fiscal conference of district financial secretaries. Pro., 1926, 214-215.

Meyer to fill the post.[1]

The laymen also pressed for a better plan to eliminate the indebtedness. They urged especially Ahlbrand's proposal that every communicant member contribute twenty-five cents a month for six months. The 1926 convention committee rejected this plan outright. What was needed instead, said the committee, was a general educative effort. The convention delegates agreed and the Board of Directors was instructed to implement such a plan.[2]

By the late Twenties, such recommendations for emphasis on stewardship were increasingly common, particularly from some leaders among the clergy. The laymen had been instrumental in achieving greater adoption of mechanical improvements in fund raising. Now, though never explicitly termed such, a corrective to the exclusive emphasis on business efficiency was added.[3] Paul Lindemann in the American Lutheran increasingly stressed Christian stewardship in its broadest sense.[4] In 1927 he devoted a whole issue to the topic.[5] During 1929 the magazine carried a long series of heavily theological articles on stewardship by the editor's brother, F. H. Lindemann.[1] Also in 1929, Concordia Publishing House brought out Karl Kretzschmar's The Stewardship Life, a little book which attempted to demonstrate the implications of Christianity for the allocation of the believer's total resources.[2]

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[1] BdD Min., 2609160; Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Oct. 2, 1926, bound with BdD Min., 1926.

[2] Pro., 1926, 212-214; LLL Pro., 1926, 22.

[3] Business terminology was not entirely eliminated by any means. As late as 1929 a memorandum referred to Synodical officials as "sales managers for their territories." "Suggestions for Continuance of the Work of the Synodical Finance Committee at Large," n.d. [1929], L. Meyer Papers, B 16.

[4] For explicit statements by the editor, see X (1927), 219; XI (1928), 499; XII (1929), 763.

[5] X, 211-228.

Of those who urged greater attention to the theology of stewardship, the most strategically placed was John H. C. Fritz. He served on the 1926 convention committee in charge of finances, then on an advisory committee to the fiscal office requested by Financial Secretary Eckhart in 1926.[3] The plan adopted for 1926-29 fund raising reflected his attention to motivation.[4] Since the goal was so large, no single drive was envisioned. Every-member canvasses annually at Thanksgiving time were to seek pledges, but the effort was to be a low keyed one with continuous emphasis on stewardship. The work of the Synod was to be set out in detail and matters of Synodical finance carefully explained.[5]

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[1] XII (1929), 528-29, 556-57, 597-99, 624-25, 742-43.

[2] Such emphasis had permeated sufficiently that at the 1929 LLL reorganization, league president Faster played down fund raising. "The central theme of the reorganization," he said, "may be summed up in that all-inclusive phrase, 'the Stewardship of Life.'" LW, XLVIII (1929), 241.

[3] Pro., 1926, 23; BdD Min., 260630K. The other members of the advisory committee were F. J. Lankenau and W. F. Wilk.

[4] For an explicit statement by Fritz, see LW, XLVII (1928), 395-397.

[5] "Plan," BdD Min., 1926. Eckhart circular letter, Aug. 11, 1926, L. Meyer Papers, B 45.

In the next three years the fiscal office turned out an impressive and constant stream of circular letters, pamphlets, tracts, booklets, and manuals. Some of this was on a par with the publications of the Ways and Means Committee. Previously, such amounts of material had been concentrated in a brief span of time and had been narrowly focused. Now the central office, rather than a drive committee, put out material that propagandized for the Synod and its work as a whole.[1] Financially, the drive was moderately successful, but showed that an educative campaign was a long term project. A questionnaire sent out by the fiscal office indicated that only about half the congregations in the Synod had followed the plan of annual every-member canvasses. Only about one-third used some form of the envelope system.[2] Immediate receipts still did not match the increased appropriations, to say nothing of reducing the debt.

A committee of laymen and pastors finally suggested a concentrated drive specifically for debt reduction, alongside of the general educative program.[3] The Board of Directors rejected this as contrary to the wishes of the 1926 convention and turned instead to another of Ahlbrand's plans. A private effort was to gather contributions of $1,000 each from 750 people. A "Pay Synod's Debt" committee was organized in St. Louis and strenuous efforts made to arouse enthusiasm for the project in other areas of the country. A goal of such magnitude, however, was far beyond such a "volunteer" effort; only about $100,000 was raised by the middle of 1929.[1] Expenditures were held down sharply in 1928 and 1929, but in spite of this, the Synod entered the Depression with a deficit of more than $600,000.[2]

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[1] Nevertheless, the effort was coolly received by some Synodical officials. President Pfotenhauer and St. Louis seminary president Franz Pieper both had serious reservations about the emphasis and effectiveness of at least some of the stewardship literature. Pfotenhauer to Pieper, 3 October 1927, Pfotenhauer Papers.

Most of the fiscal office material is now filed in the L. Meyer Papers, Boxes 45-47.

[2] Min., Synodical Finance Committee at Large, Jan. 15, 1930, L. Meyer Papers, B 16.

[3] The search for solutions to the debt demonstrated a certain loss of spontaneity that came with greater rationali-

Ironically, then, the Missouri Synod approached 1929 financially as it had approached 1917: with a depressingly large debt outstanding despite private lay attempts to eliminate it. And unfortunately, nothing like the Lutheran Laymen's League of 1917 rescued the Synod in 1929.[3]

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zation of financial administration. The fiscal office turned to the advisory committee. This committee in turn went into sessions with an "informal advisory committee" of laymen. BdD Min., 271221LL.

[1] BdD Min., 271221R, 280302Z, 280413K, 280629B, 290123M; "Calendar of Topics," bound with BdD Min., Dec., 1928; LLL Min., Mar. 9, 1928, p. 5; LW, XLVIII (1929), 69; Pro., 1929, 178.

[2] Though it was true that the Synod was its own chief creditor since most of the money was borrowed from various Synodical treasuries. LW, XLVIII (1929), 69.

[3] A determined effort in 1930 brought the debt under $400,000, but the deepening Depression eliminated this gain. SYB, 1937, 235.

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Increased attention to finances during the Twenties brought greater interest in the disbursement of the funds raised. Power of the purse included responsibility for it. Power and responsibility meant greater centralization of financial control. This fiscal centralization was part of a general trend in the Synod.

During the years of its rapid expansion in the nineteenth century, the Synod made only limited administrative adjustments to its increasing size. Historically it had put great emphasis on congregational autonomy, and limited the sphere of the Synod. Moreover, the Synod's total resources were quite limited, for the members were generally yet struggling to make a bare living in the new land. Swamped with fresh immigrants, the Synod had its hands full preparing pastors and teachers and sending them out to gather in the diaspora. As the frontier moved west, new districts were added; as settled areas became more populous, old districts were divided. The Synod itself, however, did not change much. As the Synod grew, as conditions became more settled, and the constituency rose socially and economically, the Synod did not move up with it. The result was to leave untapped a large potential.

In the twentieth century the cessation of immigration gave the Synod a chance, indeed, made it necessary to remodel its administration. Though much increased size was an important factor, more than mere numbers was involved. The demands of an American denomination were not the same as those of an immigrant group. Some functions and approaches, such as missionary orientation, had to be changed; some, like parochial schools and finances, had to be improved; and some, publicity, Sunday schools, and church architecture, were entirely new. In every case, those calling for improvements sought an administrative structure to effect their program.

The successive struggles over the creation of new offices at the triennial conventions during the Twenties testifies to the differences of opinion on the rationalization of administration. Nearly autonomous districts, congregations jealous of their independence, and simple resistance to change all slowed improvement in administration. Reform-minded critics met the arguments of centralization with the rebuttal that they, too, were arguing against centralization--the centralization of all powers in the Synodical presidency.[1] The critics referred to the governments of other American denominations, pointing out how much more administrative structure these had--and how much more they accomplished.[2] Others turned to Synodical polity. Instead of emphasizing the constitutional right of the congregation to disregard any measure of the Synod not in accord with God's word or inappropriate to local circumstances, the critics stressed the duty of the congregations to support actively Synodical programs.[1]

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[1] Literally dozens of letters by Graebner could be cited here. See, for example, Graebner to W. G. Polack, May 28, 1920, TG 61; Graebner to F. H. Eggers, May 22, 1923, TG 86; Graebner to Doege, Dec. 13, 1919, TG 62; Graebner to H. H. Zimmerman, Jan. 2, 1920, TG 69.

[2] LW, XLI (1922), 377; XLV (1926), 344.

The critics were aided by the rise of national organizations within the Synod such as the LLL and the Walther League. Contacts with these groups helped break down exclusively congregational or district identities in favor of broader, Synodical loyalties. The various intensive financial campaigns in the Synod performed much the same function. The process of educating the people to give to a Synodical cause brought the Synod to the fore as nothing had previously. Even the change of language played a part. In German, "Synode" had been applied to the general body, to its sessions, and to the sessions of the districts as well. In English the last two usages gradually died out during the Twenties, and "Synod" came to have a single meaning. Finally, the urbanization trend in the Synod helped diminish the percentage of members in small, isolated rural congregations; a suburban parish was not inherently interested in the Synod, but it was easier to reach.

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[1] Fritz in LW, XXXIX (1920), 99-100. The two extremes possible on the rights and on the duties of congregations were illustrated by two district convention essays. Speaking before the English District in 1925, E. H. Paar pressed the independence of the individual congregation. "The Relation of a Congregation to Synod," English District Pro., 1925, 9-33. While the essayist before the Northern Nebraska District recognized congregational autonomy, he stressed the binding force of Synodical resolutions, not, he said, because of divine command or because the Synod has legislative powers, but because of the voluntary pledge of the congregations to aid and maintain the Synod. J. Holstein, "The Relation of Synod to Its Members," Northern Nebraska District Pro., 1930, 9-29. See also DL, LXXXI (1925), 137-138, 170-171; LXXXIII (1927), 219.

Within this Synodical trend toward centralization, the rationalization of fund raising, too, contributed in large measure to a rationalization of administration. Concerted financial drives quickly made apparent the weaknesses of the Synod's traditional polity. The centrifugal force of congregational autonomy, especially, made fund raising particularly trying. One could not capitulate to legalism, but brotherly exhortation within the bounds of Christian freedom was not always very efficient. As the Ways and Means Committee reported to the Board of Directors, "experience has also shown again that whenever Synod as such has decided upon certain action in carrying out its resolutions, there are still many congregations that will for no apparently good reason unfortunately follow a plan of their own, or they will refuse to cooperate at all."[1]

The critics also complained about officials at district and circuit levels who did nothing to encourage the Synod's program.[2] During its campaign the Ways and Means Committee had repeatedly to urge the district presidents and circuit visitors to "fall in line," or to persuade the recalcitrants to do so.

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[1] Jan. 8, 1924, filed at CHI under W&M.

[2] Graebner to Lamprecht, Jan. 8, 1923, TG 69.

Beginning particularly with the Ways and Means Committee, the frustrations of fund raising led to attempts at tighter control over officers and congregations. The committee warned lower echelon officials, "we all have a right to expect loyalty from a [circuit] visitor. As an official of Synod he really has no choice as to whether or not he will assist in carrying out projects undertaken by the organization in which he is an official."[1] In 1929 when other attempts to meet the Synodical debt had failed, a "Synodical Finance Committee at Large" was organized by the fiscal office. Committee members were to represent Synodical interests in meetings with the president and circuit visitors of each district, then also with each individual circuit. Though the committee worked through ordinary channels, in effect it by-passed the district administration. The committee was frankly told that "in some Districts, also in such as are generally looked upon as are old and established Districts, the Synodical machinery is not functioning."[2]

Congregational autonomy was a more difficult problem. After noting that many congregations were not supporting the

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[1] Ways and Means Committee to District Presidents, n.d. [Aug., 1923], filed at CHI under W&M.

[2] Min., Synodical Finance Committee at Large, July 25, 1929, L. Meyer Papers, B 16.

The committee later reported to the Board of Directors that although the presidents of two districts practically blocked their work, "much less objection to 'outsiders' entering the District was met with than had been anticipated." Min., Jan. 15, 1930.

Synod as they should, the Ways and Means Committee recommended to the Board of Directors that

> cognizance ought to be taken of this condition, and systematic efforts should be made to remedy it, especially since it hinders the progress of the Lord's work in a number of ways. Synod failed to receive the support to which it is entitled from these churches. They give grave offense to others and their action is slowly but surely tending to discourage those who are willing, and it also quite regularly imposes a double burden upon such as cooperate immediately when the call to serve comes.[1]

Just what should be done to bring such congregations into line the Ways and Means Committee did not say; given the situation in the Twenties, possible action was quite limited. It is significant, though, that the committee brought such a recommendation to the Board of Directors and thought that the board had power to act.

The Board of Directors was established in 1920 according to the revised constitution ratified by the congregations in the previous triennium. Serving on it were the Synodical president and treasurer, two pastors, and three laymen. By both seniority and position, President Pfotenhauer was by far the dominant figure among the clergy members. The laymen were, with one exception, all founders of the Lutheran Laymen's League.[2]

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[1] Jan. 8, 1924, filed at CHI under W&M.

[2] During the Twenties, board members were Frederick Pfotenhauer, Edmund Seuel, Pastors William Hagen, and Martin F. Kretzmann, and laymen Benjamin Bosse, Henry Horst, Fred C. Pritzlaff, John Boehne, A. H. Ahlbrand, and William Schlueter, the last not a league founder. When the board was enlarged in 1929 Pastor F. C. Streufert and layman E.

According to the constitution and by-laws of the Synod,[1] the Board of Directors was to "decide upon the annual Synodical budget. It shall also see to it that the provisions of the budget, and of Synodical resolutions referring to business and financial matters, are carried out." The directors had the power to request reports from boards charged with the management of Synodical property. Furthermore, "before deciding upon matters of far-reaching importance, boards and committees shall previously get the advice and opinion of the Board of Directors." However, unless "larger sums" were involved, committees and boards appointed by the Synod itself did not need the permission of the directors to raise money in the Synod.[2]

By Synodical resolution the Board of Directors also took over the function of the former General Board of Control (Allgemeine Aufsichtsbehoerde), which had been charged with overseeing the boards of each educational institution of the Synod.[3] In carrying out this duty the board gradually

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Wengert were added.

Unfortunately the board's minutes are cryptic and usually provide only a bare listing of resolutions adopted. There is no way of viewing the interactions and influences of the various men on the board. This is especially unfortunate because the board often adopted conservative policies seemingly out of harmony with the spirit of the LLL, the one organization heavily represented. The likeliest possibility is that the directors usually deferred to President Pfotenhauer, board chairman.

[1] The by-laws were not officially in force until 1923, but were apparently treated as binding after the constitution itself was ratified in 1920.

[2] Handbook, pp. 23-24.

[3] Handbook, p. 23.

pressed for greater centralization and standardization.[1] Concerned with accurate reporting of financial status and the ready compilation of such reports, the board turned to uniform bookkeeping and auditing for the preparatory schools. This, in turn, led to readier comparison of the costs of the institutions and even more inquiries about specific, individual procedures.[2]

Almost immediately after it was organized in 1920, the Board of Directors used its fiscal powers to assert advisory control over Synodical boards administering functions other than higher education. The directors refused to release money granted the new elementary school board by the 1920 convention until that board had given the directors assurance that the two groups must "cooperate in the work of the Board of Schools."[3] When the Lutheran Immigrant Society of New York (which administered the immigrant mission there, and which was unusually well budgeted) resisted the centralization of administration, the Board of Directors wrote insisting that "all funds of Synod should be under the control of Synod through its Directors."[1] Before long the board also asserted its right to pass on all solicitation for funds by any Synodical committee.[2]

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[1] In fact the board insisted upon involvement in the minutiae of institutional accounting. The classic case occurred in 1928 when the Board of Directors of the Missouri Synod allowed three dollars to repair a door in a professor's home. Min., 280515L. The board assumed such complete control that in 1923 it recommended that the Synod remove restrictions on the amounts which might by spent by the local boards on repairs without Synodical appropriations; there was no danger of reckless spending by the local boards since they had to work through the Board of Directors. Min., 230302S; Ein., 1923, 55.

[2] Min., 230301A; 250518Hb; 250520E; Eckhart to M. F. Kretzmann, July 24, 1928, BdD, filed under "Students Fund."

[3] Min., Dec. 3, 1920. See also 200707L; 201203F; 210135F; Jan. 25, 1921.

When the time came to decide on the 1922 budget, the board resolved that it understood the constitution and by-laws "to impose upon our board the responsibility of reviewing the actions of all synodical boards in all matters of financial nature."[3] On its face, this was quite a broad interpretation of the documents referred to; but the resolution was not published and the board was unchallenged. Acting on this resolution and on the powers expressly granted it by the constitution and by-laws, the board set the 1922 budget, adjusting the amount granted each Synodical board. By the time for the consideration of the 1923 budget, procedure seemed quite routine.[4]

Any remaining doubts were answered in 1926 by the triennial convention. The delegates approved the directors' outline of the treasuries to be included in the budget; any board whose expenses were paid by the Synod had to submit its expenses and requests for funds to the Board of Directors.

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[1] Min., 201202F.

[2] Min., 220926H; 271111BB.

[3] Min., 210729C.

[4] Min., Aug. 4, 1922.

The final power to fix the budget was expanded, however, to include both the Board of Directors and the Fiscal Conference.[1]

Discussion of the large deficit in the late Twenties was not always limited to direct methods of cancelling the debt. Fearing that at the 1929 convention the delegates would be swayed into again making unrealistically high appropriations, the Board of Directors instituted an appropriations committee. All requests for funds were to be submitted to this committee a month before the convention.[2] To further limit untoward spontaneity a two-thirds majority rule was clamped on all appropriations first moved from the convention floor.[3]

Strong pressure for a centralization of financial administration came also from the Synodical Board of Auditors, a group of three laymen elected at the 1920 convention. At least two of the three selected in 1920 were exceptionally successful businessmen.[4] As their report in 1923 showed, they were scandalized by the way the Synod conducted its business. In no uncertain terms they told the Synod, "it is clear that we shall have to suggest and recommend a revision of the financial organization of Synod's several boards, committees, missions, etc."[1] The board called for an office of comptroller to act as watchdog over Synodical expenditures. Reflecting their business orientation, they produced a chart showing what they considered to be the proper flow of financial authority and checking.[2] The convention referred the comptroller proposal to the Board of Directors, which took no action.[3]

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[1] Pro., 1926, 206. The Fiscal Conference was composed of the president and a financial representative from each district. It met first in 1924 and was made a permanent institution by the 1926 triennial convention. It is unclear what party was responsible for including the conference in budget making.

[2] "Calendar of Topics," p. 6, bound with BdD Min., Dec., 1928; Min., Dec. 3, 1928; 290122B.

[3] Min., 290522M; Pro., 1929, 177.

[4] The original board was composed of Fred H. Wolff, Paul Schulze, and William Schlake. On the latter two, see J. T. Mueller, pp. 55-58 and 149-151.

Even though its personnel changed during the Twenties, the Board of Auditors continued to agitate for standardized accounting and sound business procedures.[4] In successive conventions, they achieved a measure of success. By 1929, almost all boards in the Synod were making regular reports, and the triennial convention finally approved the office of comptroller.[5]

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[1] Ver., 213.

[2] This was the only such chart to appear in print in the Synod during the Twenties.

[3] The auditors' report and subsequent action is given in Ver., 209-216.

[4] Their recommendations were as simple as a standard fiscal year, treasurers under bond, the regular use of vouchers and checks, the registering of deeds in a central place, regular auditing, and limiting the power to borrow money to the Synodical treasurer.

[5] See Ver., 1926, 294-297; Pro., 1929, 164-169.

The actions of the Board of Directors and the Board of Auditors were not those of power hungry men. The boards felt they were responding forthrightly and in good faith to the situation in the Twenties. Problems of finance were some of the most pressing in the Synod during the Twenties, yet there were few precedents to guide the search for solutions. Changes and innovations had to be made. If precedents of overly close control were set in administering the educational institutions, difficulties of excessive bureaucracy and centralization were still years away.

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The Synod opened the year 1917 with a deficit, and it closed the year 1929 also with a heavy debt. Yet the situations at World War I and at the Depression may not be equated. Enormous progress was made in this period, progress which, along with language, missions, and publicity, demonstrated the rapid acculturation of the Missouri Synod's constituency.

Throughout these years, total annual contributions for Synodical purposes rose steadily. Between 1918 and 1920, contributions averaged $524,000; in the next triennium they jumped to $1,138,000. In the years from 1924 to 1926, when the building fund collections were taking place, annual contributions for Synodical purposes nearly doubled to an average of $2,389,000; in the last years of the decade, the annual average was still about $1,830,000.[1] In a little over a decade annual contributions for Synodical purposes had nearly quadrupled. As illustrated in Figures 10 and 11, this rise in contributions for Synodical purposes was indicative of fund raising generally in the Synod.

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[1] Pro., 1929, 177.

As an index of the rise in expectations within the Synod, a comparison of budgets is even more striking. In 1917 the Synodical budget was only $430,000.[1] Twelve years later it was just over $3,000,000. Of course, neither budget was actually reached, but the point is that by the late Twenties, the Synod dared to think in millions instead of in a few hundreds of thousands.[2]

Obviously the Missouri Synod learned much between 1917 and 1929 about techniques of major fund raising campaigns. Less spectacular, but nevertheless important, steps were also taken in more routine financial procedures. Many were the work of Theodore Eckhart, who had to wage a constant battle for even the simplest improvement. According to the Lutheraner, grumblings were still heard: "That is a new way," "Our fathers did not do it," or "That was not done in Dr. Walther's time."[3]

One of the simplest and most effective improvements was the "budget treasury" idea. First put into practice on

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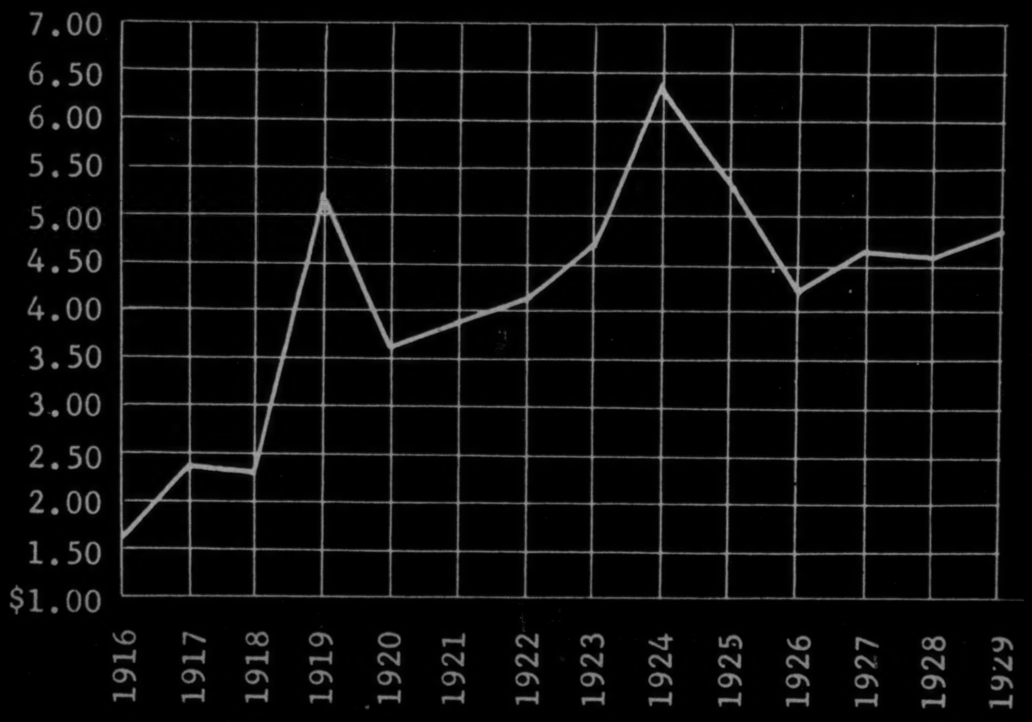
[1] LW, XXXVI (1917), 27.

[2] Also remarked on by Fritz in DL, LXXXII (1926), 176.

[3] DL, LXXVIII (1922), 174. The Lutheraner was not in sympathy with such sentiments.

FIGURE 10

AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS PER COMMUNICANT MEMBER FOR OUTSIDE PURPOSES, 1916-1929[1]



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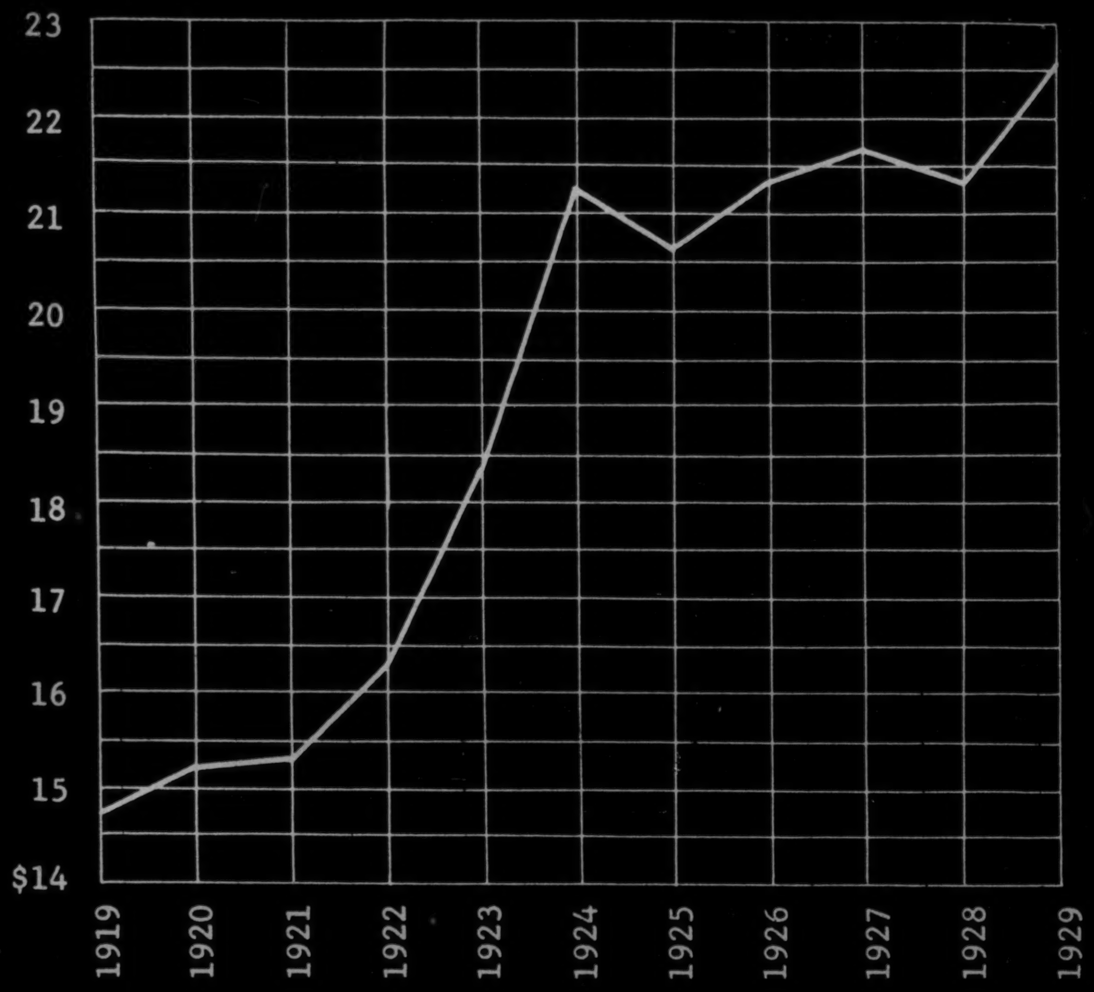
[1] "Outside purposes" was defined as any recipient within the Synod other than the home congregation. Compiled from successive issues of SYB.

FIGURE 11

AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR HOME AND OUTSIDE PURPOSES PER COMMUNICANT MEMBER, 1919-1929[1]



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[1] The figure for 1918 was only $7.54, but returns in that year were incomplete. No information is available prior to 1918. Compiled from successive issues of SYB.

a Synodical scale in January of 1922, this was nothing more than lumping all the so-called "treasuries" of the Synod under one heading, then calculating each treasury's percentage of the total. Contributions could be made in the knowledge that the total would be divided according to a set formula; all treasuries would fare alike in a good year or a bad one.[1] As basic to good business practice as this sounds, it had to be explained again and again;[2] gradually it caught on. In its first year, the "budget treasury" received about $125,000; by 1925 the figure was more than half a million and growing rapidly.[3]

Equally important progress was made on the district level. Eckhart traveled about the country a great deal during the Twenties, preaching budgets and the Ahlbrand plan. He reported in 1923 that eighteen districts used the plan all or in part, five used their own version, and only three had no plan for collection at all. But by 1923 Eckhart saw grave flaws in the Ahlbrand plan. Too many people were involved in its administration, he thought; a particularly weak link was the circuit visitor, upon whom the plan depended heavily.[1]

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[1] Naturally the system did not preclude contributions to a definite purpose. The idea had been anticipated and applied by Ahlbrand as early as 1919. LLL Trans., 1919, p. 54.

[2] See, for example, DL, LXXVII (1921), 384, 420; LXXVIII (1922), 97; LXXX (1924), 166; LW, XL (1921), 376.

[3] Eckhart to District Presidents, Sept. 22, 1922, BdD, filed under "Financial secretary"; Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Jan. 8, 1924, bound with BdD Min., 1924; Pro., 1926, 197.

By hard experience Eckhart gradually developed a system of his own. Soon after taking office he asked each district president to appoint a layman as financial correspondent; Eckhart then provided this man with appropriate forms for uniform reporting.[2] On the suggestion of some district treasurers, Eckhart asked authorization in 1923 for a conference of district financial representatives. The Board of Directors finally agreed and the first meeting was held in October of 1924.[3] When the group met in the spring of 1926, it asked for, and received authorization from the triennial convention to meet annually.[4] The meeting came to be important in fixing the budget, the distribution of information, praise, and censure, and the collection of first-hand reports from the field.

By 1929 the Missouri Synod had learned the techniques of large financial campaigns; it had improved its methods of gathering funds for regular operating expenses; and it had centralized its administration to a certain extent in order to improve fiscal affairs. In short, it had developed an economic base for large scale action. Most important, in doing all this, it had passed another test imposed by the process of acculturation on immigrant churches. By 1926, the Synod ranked twelfth in size among American denominations and thirteenth in total contributions.[1] The impressive financial progress of the Synod between 1917 and 1929 was proof that the Missouri Synod layman had arrived at the point in acculturation where he had both the resources and the desire to accept the financial responsibilities placed on denominations by the American religious tradition.

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[1] Eckhart to Graebner, June 5, 1923, TG 65; Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Sept. 6, 1921, BdD, "Financial secretary."

[2] Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Nov. 24, 1920, BdD, "Financial secretary." By January, 1921, fifteen out of the twenty-two districts had such a financial representative. Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Jan. 14, 1921, BdD, "Financial secretary."

[3] Eckhart to Bd. of Directors, Feb. 28, 1923; BdD Min., 240910NN; DL, LXXX (1924), 423; LW, XLIII (1924), 424. A meeting may have been held of those representatives present at the 1923 triennial convention. See BdD Min., 230302Qd.

[4] Pro., 1926, 215. The same fiscal conference was the source of the memorial to the triennial convention favoring more help in the fiscal office.

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[1] Religious Bodies: 1926, I, 15, 24.

EPILOGUE

Along with the years between the coming of the Saxon immigrants to Perry County in 1839 and the founding of the Synod in 1847, the years between the First World War and the Depression were the most traumatic in the history of the Missouri Synod. An impressive amount of acculturation, and a large number of events crucial in the subsequent history of the Synod were concentrated between 1917 and 1929. The most important part of the language change occurred within that period, change which had effects on the Synod's school system, its literature and periodicals, the careers of its officials, and on the sense of identity within the Synod.

The years between the War and the Depression also saw fundamental changes in mission orientation. The Synod moved from concentration on German immigrants to a broader expectation which included all unchurched Americans. Along with this change came a willingness to publicize actively the Missouri Synod on the American scene. Here motives of evangelism and of an increased desire for denominational recognition became inextricably mixed.

In the same period occurred the founding and flowering of organizations such as the American Lutheran Publicity

Bureau, the Lutheran Publicity Organization, the American Luther League, and the Lutheran Laymen's League. Each of these represented in its own way the rapid pace of acculturation at almost all levels of the Missouri Synod. The LLL was particularly important for its reflection of and impact on lay activism and fund raising in the Synod.

By the end of the decade, then, language, missions, the educational system, and organization had all undergone major changes. In other words, of the most significant characteristics in terms of which an immigrant religious body may be studied, only the theology and social attitudes of the Missouri Synod were relatively stable between 1917 and 1929.

In fact, if anything, the Synod found more cause in the events and trends of the Twenties to remove itself still further from American Protestantism. The virulent anti-Germanism of American church leaders during the war, then the breast-beating retreat to the opposite extreme of pacifism drew only jibes from Missourian spokesmen (jibes, it is true, which have a strangely modern ring). To a church which concentrated on its own school system, the Bible reading in the public schools supported by some churchmen was a dangerous mixing of church and state. In the Modernist-Fundamentalist split of the Twenties, the Missouri Synod was violently against the heresies of the liberals, yet could not identify with the Fundamentalists. Aspects of the Fundamentalist hermeneutics, their treatment of the sacraments, their unionism, and their Sabbatarianism and Prohibition made the Fundamentalists another of the groups from which the Synod disassociated itself. Significant questioning of the Synod's social attitudes and of aspects of its theology had to wait for the late Thirties and early Forties.

The Depression was not an auspicious era for an immigrant church to make its debut on the American religious scene. The Thirties brought their own problems, such as lack of money and a surplus of ministerial candidates, problems to be struggled with for another decade and a half of slow growth before the explosive expansion of the Missouri Synod after World War II. No one in 1929 could forecast the Synod's growth fifteen years later, but by the Depression at least, it was clear that the Missouri Synod was firmly committed to the transition to an American denomination.

The younger generation would rapidly complete the process of acculturation in the Thirties, judging from Walther League Messenger fiction in the Twenties. This fiction in the young peoples' monthly was of dubious literary merit, but the work of G. L. Wind, especially, was a good reflection of the aspirations and probably also of the lives of many Missouri Synod young people.[1] Thematically,

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[1] A staff artist for the Messenger, Wind was first introduced as author in that magazine in 1926. In the same year his first novel, Natalie, was published. Two more

Wind concentrated on a single over-riding concern: contemporary young people in an acquisitive society, and religion. His plots were set in America of the 1920's. His main characters were usually young men and women, the first generation in their families to move to the large city and get ahead in managerial or secretarial positions. Bored with the small Midwest towns in which they grew up, the younger generation longed for better things and moved to the city to strive for them. Motivation for the move was so familiar to Wind's readers that he rarely dwelt on it. Natalie Miller, in the novel Natalie, simply announced to her brother-guardian that she had decided to go. When he pointed out he would not be able to send much money, she replied, "I can work and earn. . . . Girls do, nowadays."[1]

The older generation was typed as honest, steady tradesmen and mechanics, wise in their mature age, though perhaps somewhat slow. Occasionally, to provide a foil, a mature couple was cast as social climbers who by a stroke of financial luck were able to leave their old neighborhood, friends, and, as often as not, church, to blunder from one *faux pas* to another in more fashionable society. Other foils were the effeminate dandies, unthinkingly up to date on flapper manners and fashion; they usually wound up paired

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novels, The Land of Sunny Days (1926) and The Pride of Greystone (1927), followed in quick succession along with a steady stream of serialized novels and short stories for the Messenger.

[1] P. 202.

with the unsufferably pseudo-sophisticated young woman. The upper class was also represented: invariably polite, but stubborn and proud--too involved in the social whirl of dancing parties, cards, alcohol, and high-powered cars to have time, and too knowledgeable to have the desire, to go to church.

The city, the business office, and the university were all accepted in Wind's fiction.[1] None was inherently evil, to be avoided by Christian youth. Each, of course, had its dangers, but the heroine secretary may cover her ears or walk out when her employer used grosser expletives; the young engineer may refuse to dance at the office party; the university student may confront the atheist dean with Christian witness, and the evolution-teaching professor with the Bible.

It was in the city or at the office, moreover, that the majority of Wind's favorites found husbands and wives. By sterling Christian character--and hard work--the young woman attracted the attention of her employer or of the rich young heir; the young man successfully courted the boss's secretary. In addition to being non-Lutheran, the partner was occasionally of non-German stock as well. But in any case he or she was brought to church, converted, and married--in that order.[1] The couple then settled down to a successful life, close to their church, and within the city.

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[1] After surveying the advertising in secular periodicals during the Twenties, Slosson concluded that "in nearly all advertising copy the possible consumer was vaguely placed in some 'office' and assumed to be a business man. Except in farm journals, the out-of-door worker rarely appeared on the page, and the professional man and the factory operative were almost equally neglected." (P. 367.) Slosson also found an "emphasis on social competition--'keeping up with the Joneses.' Social standards were fixed not by the economic class in which the consumer lived but by the class immediately above." (P. 366.)

There is no reason to doubt that Wind was in large measure simply reporting the life he saw among Missouri Synod youth. Lutheran young people were participating in the rural-urban shift, the girls were getting secretarial jobs, the boys were going to college,[2] and both were intermarrying to some extent with non-Germans.

The effect of these trends among the younger generation became clear in the Thirties when that generation came into influence. By 1937, two decades after United States entry into the war, the most obvious and easily measured aspect of acculturation, linguistic change, was far advanced. Of the combined 1937 subscription lists of the two Synodical organs, Der Lutheraner and the Lutheran Witness, subscribers to the English periodical comprised 77%. Similarly, in a 1937 survey of actual church attendance within the Synod, 77% of those present were in English services.

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[1] At this point Wind partially rejected the business ethic. All of his heroines quit work--to the intense disappointment of their employers--and thereafter remained at home.

[2] Additional proof of this is provided by the Concordia Cyclopedia, a one volume religious reference book, published in 1927. The editors of the work included practical information they assumed pastors and laity needed. By present day standards, the article on colleges was disproportionately long. Nearly five columns were taken up by names of "the best American colleges of the standard type, without denominational affiliation or with such affiliation not strongly marked." A list of Lutheran institutions was also included. Ed. L. Fuerbringer (CPH), pp. 161-164.

Two decades after the war, baptized membership in congregations using only German or more German than English accounted for only 7% of the total of the Synod. By comparison, in 1919, it was the all English classification which accounted for about the same percentage. Part of the reason for such a dramatic change in positions was the much higher growth rate of English-speaking congregations. Between 1927 and 1937, while congregations using German exclusively gained an annual average of 8 new members per 1,000 baptized members, the congregations using only English gained 65 for every 1,000 members.

This figure is supported by the Synod's missionary outreach to non-German stock. The number of adults confirmed is a good index of this outreach.[1] In 1918, 2,000 adults were confirmed; in 1927, the figure had doubled to 5,000. A decade later, it nearly doubled again to more than 9,000. Additional evidence that the Synod was rapidly completing its adjustment to its place as an American denomination rather than an immigrant religious body was the overall Synodical growth. Between 1917 and 1929, the communicant membership of the Synod increased 12%. But in the decade following, membership increased by 26%.[1]

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[1] See Chapter V.

Thus the younger generation described in the fiction of the Twenties completed in large measure the process brought to a head by World War I. Their children, the following generation, would have to learn German from books as a foreign language, and would attend with great curiosity a German service in some isolated rural parish.

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[1] The above figures were calculated from statistics given in SYB, 1937, 152-153, 184-185.

APPENDIX

Characteristic of the Missouri Synod particularly in the period of greatest acculturation between 1917 and 1929 was a pattern of apparently independent or semi-independent organizations, societies, and committees. The most important of these have already been explored, but the list also includes such organizations as the Walther League, the American Luther League, the Valparaiso University Association, and the Post-Graduate Home Society. Usually these groups represented the ideas and initiative of a small group of individuals and were established to carry on a limited, specific program in lieu of Synodical action.

Such a pattern was caused partly by the radically varied levels of acculturation in the Synod at the time. Quite apparently, the difference in acculturation between those in the ALPB and a pastoral conference in North Dakota, or between the founders of the LLL and a group of laymen in Minnesota was a tremendous one. The pattern was fostered also by the conservatism of Synodical officialdom which tended to view the Synod as severely limited in scope of powers and action. President Pfotenhauer, as already shown, was extremely reluctant to initiate a wartime bureau or add more men to the financial office.

The pattern was possible partly because of the theological homogeneity in the Synod at this time and also because of the relatively loose administration by leading officials. Pfotenhauer's almost casual way of disagreeing with Graebner's editorial stand in 1918 on participation in patriotic activities, for instance, demonstrates a remarkably restrained administration.

This pattern of discrete organizations operating within the Synod but without official centralized Synodical control was workable largely because of the interlocking directorates. How these could function has been explained in the case of radio station KFUO. But besides holding multiple offices, the men who made and influenced decisions in the Synod were linked by ties of family and friendship. The system of ministerial education put students together in small classes from high school through seminary, building strong bonds which lasted long after graduation. Moreover, pastors tended to marry pastors' daughters. Finally, living together on the seminary campus, the St. Louis faculty was particularly close knit.

For example, J. H. C. Fritz, dean of students at the seminary and active in many aspects of Synodical life, was a classmate, friend, and colleague of Witness editor Theodore Graebner. One of Graebner's brothers-in-law was the pastor of a large St. Louis church, R. H. C. Meyer, who was on the Concordia Publishing House board of directors. One of

Meyer's sisters-in-law was secretarial assistant to the financial secretary of the Synod, Theodore Eckhart, who in turn depended heavily for advice and assistance on J. H. C. Fritz. Fritz also was closely associated with Richard Kretzschmar on the KFUO project. Kretzschmar's brother-in-law was A. G. Brauer, first secretary of the LLL and friend of Theodore Lamprecht, with whom he helped found the league. Lamprecht was president of the LLL; he served the ALPB in the same capacity. He was also a classmate of Ludwig Fuerbringer, editor of the Lutheraner. Fuerbringer was, in turn, a close associate of Fritz, both as a seminary colleague and from their work on the constitutional committee. Small wonder the popular saying in the Synod was that everyone in the Missouri Synod was somehow related.

A complete picture of the ties created by friendship and intermarriage is difficult to reconstruct. One may, however, determine the extent of multiple office-holding and over-lapping activities. The following chart demonstrates the official participation of a select list of men in some of the important groups and offices within the Missouri Synod between 1917 and 1929. Neither the list of men nor of offices and organizations is exhaustive, but it is fairly typical. A given individual, however, need not have taken part simultaneously in all of the activities or offices checked after his name.

FIGURE 12

MULTIPLE OFFICE-HOLDING

	American Luther League	Faculty	Editor	Literature Board	CPH Bd. of Directors	Synod. Bd. of Directors	LLL	LLL Reorganization Comm.	Constitutional Comm.	Synodical Official	Foreign Missions	ALPB	LPO	KFUO	Seminary Bd. of Control	Seminary Bldg. Comm.	War-Time Bureau	Board for Army and Navy	Ways and Means Committee	Post-Grad. Home Society
F. Brand										x	x						x			
J. Baur	x																		x	x
A. Doerffler												x	x		x					
J. Fritz		x		x	x			x	x			x	x	x		x			x	
L. Fuerbringer		x	x						x		x					x				x
T. Graebner		x	x	x								x				x				
R. Kretzschmar								x					x	x	x	x				
W. Maier		x	x					x						x						
L. Meyer								x		x										
M. Sommer		x	x	x							x									
F. Streufert						x				x	x									
A. Ahlbrand						x	x													
A. Brauer						x	x						x		x	x				
W. Boehne							x		x											
T. Eckhart							x			x								x	x	
H. Horst						x	x									x				
T. Lamprecht							x					x								
F. Pritzlaff						x	x													
E. Seuel					x	x	x			x										

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William F. Arndt

Ludwig Fuerbringer

O. A. Geisemann

Martin Graebner

Theodore Graebner

Walter A. Maier

Lawrence Meyer

Frederick Pfotenhauer

Franz Pieper

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